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Hints and thoughts for  
Christians

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# HINTS AND THOUGHTS

FOR

## CHRISTIANS.

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# HINTS AND THOUGHTS FOR CHRISTIANS.

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## I.

### TURNING THE SPY-GLASS.

DID you ever look through a spy-glass? How it magnifies every object that comes within its range! How plainly you can see things that are a great way off! And then, did you ever turn it and look into the large end? How small, and how very far off it makes every thing look! And yet you see every thing very distinctly, though they seem so small.

In looking back upon the years and the things that are past, I sometimes seem to be looking through a spy-glass in this way. How

small, and yet how distinct every thing appears.

I was lately recalling the first funeral that I was called to attend after my ordination. It was in a distant part of the town, in a small brown house, low and old and humble, on the side of a hill. In it there lived a young widow with her two babes, and her aged father. They were all the world to each other. If I remember rightly, the husband had been suddenly and instantly killed at his work by the breaking of some machinery. And now his wife, the daughter of the old man and the mother of these little children, was to be buried. The house was crowded at the funeral, for all the neighbors respected this family, and felt for them in their sorrows.

I cannot recall the name of the family—they were not of my flock. But I remember the picture. The old family Bible much worn, lay on a little candle-stand, and the best chair in the house was set for the minister. Near the head of the coffin sat the old father, and on each knee a little grandchild, about eighteen months old—for they were twins. They

were dressed in little white robes, with a simple knot of black ribbon on each shoulder. The aged one put an arm round each child, while the tears literally rushed down his face. But they, the little motherless ones, sat contented, playing with the white locks of their grandfather, feeling that all was right with them so long as they had him with them. All the roomful of people wept at the sight, rather than at any thing that I could say.

I wondered if that mother, in her new home, was then thinking of these beautiful babes. I wondered if it was of such Christ was speaking when he said, "Their angels do always behold the face of my Father in heaven." And now I am wondering what must be the state of that Christian mother, reared in that little home, as her spirit hath grown in the world of light, and what is the history of those little babes: Have they been sanctified, and have they joined their mother, or do they still linger in this world of trial? In a lowly, very likely an unknown grave, that old man sleeps; but has he not forgotten all his tears here, in the blessedness of heaven?

Another thought—a more sad one. I said that all who attended that funeral were much affected. There was hardly a dry eye among them. But I never heard that one of them was so affected as to turn to Christ and become a Christian. Such feelings are “like the morning cloud and the early dew,” unless the Spirit of the Lord make them deeper than tears.

As we go along in life and turn the spy-glass and look back, we see the frailties and the faults of our departed friends grow less and less, and smaller and smaller, till at length we see nothing left but their goodness and their excellencies. And will it not be so for ever, till the time shall come, in the progress of the soul, when we shall forget *all* their faults, and remember only what was good, and thus we shall see only “the spirits of just men *made perfect?*”

On the other hand, as we turn the spy-glass, our own shortcomings and sins do not seem smaller or fewer. They seem more in number and larger in size, till our past life seems very barren of good, and very full of

evil. May it not be so for ever? And thus, as we advance, the mercy of God and the compassion of Christ will seem more and more precious to the soul, till we can admire him, love him, and trust him more and more. Perhaps one of the feelings, when Christ comes "to be admired by all them that believe," will be this great sense of unworthiness. But we would not have it otherwise. We shall continue to turn the spy-glass for ever, we doubt not; and if "the hole of the pit" from which we were taken seems deep and dark, and if "the rock whence we were hewn" seems rough and hard, so much the more shall we adore and praise the Lamb who hath redeemed us. Oh, reader, often turn the spy-glass and look back on your life. What you see will do you good and make you better.

## H.

## CUTTING DOWN EXPENSES

WE all cry out upon the extravagance of our day, showing itself in every thing and in every form. We hear a great deal too said about the duty of "cutting down expenses," and returning to primitive habits. We feel that it is a duty, especially for men who live on salaries and small stated means. But it is much easier to acknowledge the duty, and to exhort others to it, than to perform it. I sympathize with those who, like me, are making the experiment. Now to begin: postage. A very small affair, you think. True, but I know, from actual accounts kept, that my postage costs me far more than it did at the old dear rates. I often now send off eight letters a day, no one of which is on my own account; and I think I send at least six now, where I did one then; this multiplies my paper, pens, and ink six times, and how am I to "cut down?" When so much is put within our

reach, our desires grasp largely, and we feel that it is a duty to use freely, and as the Irish father wrote to his son, when postage was put down from twelve pence to a penny, "Write often, Georgie, and remember that every letter you write saves your father eleven pence."

In one of our financial reverses or panics, I was greatly amused at hearing one of my rich friends describe his attempts at "cutting down expenses." He had heavy engagements on hand, had met with losses, and the sky looked dark. So one morning before going to the store, after having drank his cup of "Mocha," and eaten well, he began,

"Wife, I do believe we must begin at once and curtail our expenses. Times are fearful, and I don't know what a day may bring forth. I come home to poor sleep, and I go away trembling every morning."

"Very well, my dear, I feel just so, and will agree to any thing you propose, and will second every plan. Where shall we begin?"

"Why, there's my cigars. I can leave off smoking, I rather think."

My friend is a foreigner, and had been brought up in a country where every male smokes from childhood to the grave.

“Oh, no, no; why, you have smoked all your life long, and it would kill you to stop. And besides, you have a thousand, or perhaps three thousand on hand, all paid for. I wont hear a word to your denying yourself so. I wont hear to that.”

“Well, you are a dear, good wife, and I ’ll not dispute you; but do you now propose.”

“Suppose we sell the coach horses. It’s very expensive to keep them, and we very seldom use them, you know.”

“True, true. But, my dear, if we sell the horses, then Tom will have nothing in the world to do, and you would n’t turn Tom away, surely?”

“Why, I did n’t think of that. Why not sell old Kate, we never use her?”

“Yes, but old Kate has got a baby, and you do n’t know into whose hands that beautiful colt will fall.”

“Oh, now I do think of one thing. We can do without the fire in the hall; that great

stove burns a world of coal, and we can get along without it; all the chambers have registers by which to let in heat."

"True, but you know that grandmother has to go through the entry to get to her room, and you would not make her go through a cold hall, would you?"

"Well, now *you* propose; for I can't think of any thing else."

"Suppose, my dear, you do with one girl less; there are only three of us, and perhaps two girls could get along."

"Very well. I am agreed. Which shall we turn off?"

"Suppose it be Sue; she has lived with us only two years, and the others are old settlers, and it would seem hard to turn them away."

"So be it. I will give her notice this very day."

Off went my friend to his counting-room, quite elated that he was "cutting down expenses." It was to save him four or five dollars a week. It brightened the whole day. But alas for human gladness! When he got

home at night, the whole house was in distress, grandmother crying, and wife crying, and Sue utterly used up.

“Well, what’s the matter now?”

“Oh, Sue don’t want to go,” says grandmother.

“She’s lived here so long, and is so much at home here,” says wife.

“She has no place to go to,” says grandmother.

“She says places are scarce now, especially good places,” says wife.

“Sue, Sue,” shouted my friend. In came Sue, almost howling at the cruelty of her master.

“Why, Sue, don’t you want to go?”

“No, sir; why should I? I feel that I can’t go.”

“Very well, Sue, stay, stay; we’ll all swim or sink together.”

And thus ended his “cutting down expenses.”

In this case there was no real necessity. But it is not so with the poorer classes of society, to which we ministers and most of our

people belong. It is very doubtful whether we have it in our power to make great changes at once. But we can begin, or as splendid writers would say, "inaugurate" small ones at once. Where we used to have a pair of new boots yearly, by properly oiling the leather, tops and bottoms, once in two weeks, we can make them last two years. By properly brushing and hanging up the hat, using the old one in storms, we can make our hat last two years instead of one. By a careful management of the stove, you can double the value of your fuel. By using molasses on your cakes instead of Stuart's syrup, by learning to use less sugar by half a teaspoonful, by having fewer pies and cakes on the table, by watching the soap-barrel, that there is no waste there, by watching a thousand little leaking-places, which a good wife can do, we can "cut down expenses." The true economy in buying is to get the *best*, not the most fashionable, but the best quality or none. I have always found the best merino dress for the ladies the cheapest in the end. True economy is to go without, or get good quality.

Do n't be ashamed of being economical. Any thing but debt. By all means, at any present suffering, unless you are on the sick-bed, keep out of debt. If you *must* run in debt, borrow in a large sum, and not run up little bills here and there. You are a prisoner for life if you do. If possible, save fifty dollars a year, if no more. You cannot imagine how different you feel if you have a little saved, and you are adding to it even a little. I have a noble friend on whom I have just called living on a salary. And they, by keeping account of every cent they spend, and by cutting down and being careful at every spot, contrive to lay aside the fifty dollars as often as before these salary-trying times. They are just as happy, show no meanness, and I honor and love them the more. Come now, good reader, what will you do towards "cutting down expenses?"

## III.

## GIVING MADE EASY.

THOSE who are open-handed, free, generous, and to whom it is easy to give away, are not the people who have the means, usually, of sustaining the charities of the church and of the age. It is those who naturally love money, who labor and toil for it, and who save it, and to whom it is naturally hard work to give away, who have this work to do. They are naturally covetous, and will live and die so, unless another principle—the constraining love of Christ—comes in and makes them liberal. Now if I can suggest to all such—those who have conscience and Christian principle, and who want to be liberal, but find it hard work—a method by which they can give easily, I am sure they will thank me.

The key then which will easily unlock the heart and open the purse, and make giving easy, is *to make giving to Christ a part of worship.*

Open to the eighth chapter of Second Corinthians, and you will see that giving is considered an outflowing of the *grace* of Christ which was in them. “As ye abound in every thing, in faith, in utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love towards us, see that ye abound in *this grace* also. For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be made rich;” that is, the grace which brought Christ from heaven to the cross will flow out of the Christian, because if he have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his.

Under the Jewish system there was no worship without giving, and every act of giving was an act of worship. When David and the princes of Israel gathered together to make an offering to build a temple which he, and probably many of the princes would never see, what a magnificent offering they made with prayer and worship; and the gifts and the worship rose up to the high heavens together. When Solomon came to dedicate the temple, he offered a model prayer, and hon-

ored God with all the endowments of his great mind; but with it he presented his twenty-two thousand oxen, his one hundred and twenty thousand sheep, and other things in proportion. Reckon it up and see if it could be less, according to our lowest estimates, than thirteen hundred thousand dollars. This you will say was a national offering, on a most extraordinary occasion. True; but you will recollect that in all their worship every man was to bring an offering: "None shall appear before me empty." And lest any should say, "I am not a prince, I am not rich, I cannot bring my talent of gold, or my unblemished bullock, or my sheep," the poor man was not therefore to be deprived of worship. He may bring his turtledoves, or his young pigeons, or if he has nothing else, his little portion of flour, his wine, his new corn, his cakes fried or baked, and if he has not even these, his sprinkling of salt. The poorest might worship, but he must not come empty in his worship. Worship and giving were inseparably joined together.

When the mercy of God, after the ascen-

sion, came to the Gentile world, the very first door the angel entered was that of Cornelius, the Roman soldier, whose prayers and alms came up before God: "he gave much alms to the people." When the poor woman came up to the temple to worship, she cast in her two mites as a part of her worship. And Paul says, "But to do good and to communicate forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." Gifts and offerings and worship go together. These gifts are an "odor of sweet smell, a sacrifice well pleasing to God." In all our charities and contributions, Paul directs that we attend to *four* points: first, they must be acts of worship; second, at stated times; thirdly, frequent; and fourthly, universal. Now see. "Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him."

And this leads me to say, that in fact, you do not give to Foreign Missions, or to Home Missions, or to the Tract cause; if you do it as an act of worship, you give directly to *Christ*. "Inasmuch as ye did it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

We will now suppose that we all give as an act of worship—and that this is the true Bible principle I have no doubt—what would be the results?

*It would be very easy to give.*

If we part with our property, not as something devoted to Christ, but as something wrenched from us to feed or clothe *men*, and something sacrificed to stop the calls of agents; if giving is something to be endured and groaned over, and got rid of as soon as possible, we shall always give grudgingly, sparingly, with no heart, no faith, and no reward. There is no place where we enjoy giving so much as at the monthly concert of prayer, because we there give as an act of worship. We give and pray together.

Then as to frequency. Is not public worship easier, pleasanter, more profitable to him who goes to the house of God weekly and stately, than if he went but once in six months? If you were to pray in public, would it not be easier to pray to Christ than to the congregation? So, if you give to Christ as a part of worship, you do not give to men, but

to him directly. It is pleasant to think that when we give to Christ, it is just as acceptable to him as prayer. It will therefore make us “cheerful” givers, and “God loveth a cheerful giver.” If I set apart a share of my property to him to-day, it matters not to me what the next call may be. It may go to send a minister to the heathen, or to preach to the scattered, feeble, and discouraged little flock at home ; or it may send a Bible to some destitute family, or a messenger to the hospital, it matters little to me. I have given it to Christ, and I look to him to direct it and use it. The bread cast upon the waters may not be found till after many days ; but it went into Christ’s purse, and whether he sent it to the poor or let Judas steal it, I have not the responsibility. The poor widow’s mite, and the ministrations of the women of Galilee, were like worship, acceptable to him. It would be pleasant, if like Mary you could pour ointment directly on the head of the Redeemer ; but it is just as acceptable to him if you pour it on the wounded disciple. It would be pleasant on the cold, stormy night

to have Christ come in and share your warmth and food and home. Give it to one of his brethren, and you give it to Him. It would be pleasant, my brother minister, for you to harness your horse and carry Him to preach to some neglected neighborhood. Just as acceptable to him if you will go yourself and preach to that neighborhood. Your hand, Christian, feels stiff and tight when called upon to give to some "cause" or "object" or "thing." Why, you need not turn your bullock into the field to run anywhere; bring him directly up to the altar of God and sacrifice him to the Lord. The poor man need not let his turtledoves go out of his hand into the open air; he may bring them to the altar where the hyssop will be dipped into their blood, and the little creatures will preach of the shedding of that blood that will take away sin.

Giving as an act of worship, will also *cause more to be given to Christ.*

When a call is made in a congregation, it is often the case that each man has his favorite object. "I don't give to Foreign Mis-

sions," says one. "I give only to Home Missions," says a second. "I don't give to either, I give to the Bible Society," says a third. Now, properly speaking, you don't give to either. You don't expect the Bible Society, or the Missionary Society to reward you. You expect Christ to do it. Then why not give it to *Him* directly, and make it an act of solemn worship. Besides, if we gave as an act of worship, we should be ashamed to deposit *half a dime*, and ask Christ to receive it as an act of worship. We should want a larger sum to pay over.

"If I was rich and had abundance, I would give. I should n't feel it." True, and would you feel any reward? "But I have but little, I am poor." Very well. But it is your duty to worship, is it not? "*Let every one of you*," the poor as well as the rich, lay aside, and that "*according* as God hath prospered him; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." It is as really a *sacrifice* as if you brought your sheep or your bullock, and offered it on God's altar. You, poor man, are not willing that the rich shall receive all the rewards at

the last day. What crown that a monarch ever wore would buy the reward of her who broke the alabaster box of ointment on the head of Jesus, or even the reward of the widow who brought her two mites? I know that it would be better for the rich and for their children, were they to cast tenfold into the treasury of the Lord; but I want the common people and the poor to have the blessing of giving, consecrating it by prayer, and making every gift an act of worship. When the day comes when all the church shall act on this principle, when the ten thousand rain-drops shall go in and make up little streams, and these again make up great rivers, when none shall appear before him empty, then will vastly more be given to Christ, and giving will be as delightful as any other part of worship.

## IV.

## UNCLE JERRY.

THERE are some men who seem by general consent “elected” to be “uncle” to a whole neighborhood. Why it is that they receive this title, is what I do not know. Perhaps because they are too old for a younger title, and not gentle enough and loving enough to be called “father.” Be it as it may, old Jeremiah Slow was known by the title of “Uncle Jerry” as long ago as I can remember. He had many traits of character peculiar to himself, as every man has; but I am to confine myself to his moral character.

Now you must know that “Uncle Jerry” lived in a corner of the town, full four and a half miles from the centre and from the house of worship. For sixty years he had lived in the same house, slept in the same room, gone to the same church, and sat in the same pew. He had a venerable look, honest in appearance, but a look that was vacant and inexpress-

sive. He was what we call a "clever" man; by which we mean harmless, inoffensive, and not efficient enough to run against anybody. He was a good neighbor, if a want pressed itself upon him; but he never troubled himself to hunt for sorrows, in order to relieve them. No man, in the whole congregation, was more sure to be in his place on the Sabbath than Uncle Jerry. Be the weather what it might, let any stay away that chose, he was always there. Old Kate, with a long white streak in her face, was sure to be there, let what other horses stand in the stable that would. At the very moment the minister entered the pulpit, Uncle Jerry entered his pew. So he had done for more than half a century, being able to count over twenty-one different preachers who had come and gone, while he stuck by the church. He often boasted that he had travelled more miles in going to and from the church, than would be necessary to carry him round the world. And yet Uncle Jerry was not a religious man. He lived and died, so far as we know, without any religious feeling or concern. He seemed to go to church

out of habit, and knew every man who was present or absent, every stranger who happened in, where he belonged, and to whom he was related. Uncle Jerry had no sympathy with contributions and collections, and seemed to feel that all who meddled with such things were a kind of spiritual leech, to sneak the very blood out of the simple. So he lived—not having an enemy in the world—all calling him “Uncle Jerry,” and none feeling his loss at death, except that it seemed awkward, at first, to see his pew empty.

And I have been trying to discover how it was that a man could be and do as Uncle Jerry did—attend church so constantly, hear so many sermons, hear ministers of talents and powers so unlike, hear so many of the songs of Zion, and hear so many prayers—and yet never manifest any interest in personal religion; and I have come to the following results:

1. He had little to excite him to think. He lived away in a corner. If there were brilliant lectures, sacred concerts, exciting meetings of any kind, he was not there. If the bell tolled for a great man, and the com-

munity came together, and great and feeling tributes were paid to the dead, and their deeds recounted, he was not there. If a revival of religion was powerful in the town—as it was many times during his life—he was at none of the meetings. He heard only of a “religious stir,” but it never stirred him. Now we know that activity of mind is an important element in the salvation of the soul. Take our colleges as an example of what I mean, and you find that there is no class of young men in society in which so many become Christians, in proportion to their numbers. One reason plainly is, their minds are awake and excited, and hence the truth and the Spirit of God have materials upon which and with which to work. Uncle Jerry jogged on in the same beaten track, without ever having the mind startled or quickened. It moved, like the great stone wheel of his cider-mill, in the same groove.

2. He had no religious reading. The difference between the mind that reads and is fed, and one that does not, is amazing. But on Uncle Jerry’s table no new books ever made their appearance. No new magazines

unfolded their attractions. He bought the "Farmer's Almanac" once a year, and studied the signs of the Zodiac, and saw when the storms and cold were predicted to come, and that was all. He never took a religious newspaper—I mean a weekly religious paper! I have certain weaknesses, doubtless—and you may call this one—but I have the strong belief that while, to many, the religious paper is of little value, to such as Uncle Jerry it is a means of grace. Suppose he had had the large clear-typed religious journal come to him weekly, and he had read it aloud in his family, and had talked over the news of the state of the church coming from all lands, the communications from many of the most gifted minds, extracts from the most important books, biographies of the most devoted men, the labors of the most faithful servants of Christ, the results of very careful observation on all points pertaining to humanity, would he not have been a very different man; had a mind more alive and awake, and his sympathies with his race called out and warmed? Would not the Holy Spirit have

found his susceptibilities more awake, and his heart a much larger one? As it was, he read nothing, save now and then a mumbling over a chapter in his Bible. He thought next to none, and then only with very feeble thought. I am not at all sure that it might not be written of him, *This man lost his soul for the want of a weekly religious paper!* The next consequence was sure to follow, namely, that he never went to church *expecting* to become a religious man. He never united with the church, and he never expected to. He never had family worship, and he never expected to. He was never interested in a revival, and he never expected to be. He connected this life with the next by no definite thought, or plans, or actions.

Now there are hundreds of families who live on the borders and in the corners of our towns, who are living just as Uncle Jerry did, only they don't go to church as he did. Many of them can't go; most don't try. They want something to excite and move their thoughts. They will come out to a "school-house meeting" now and then, but they want

something to keep their thoughts from muddling. And I give it as the result of an anxious experience and observation, that no *one* thing, short of conversion to God, would be so great a blessing to people who live in retired parts of a country town, *as to take and read a weekly religious paper.*

## V.

## A STING, AND ITS CURE.

Most of my readers know that within a few years, at great trouble and expense, our apiarians have introduced the "Italian bee" among us. It is said that the first queen bee imported cost three hundred dollars. It is claimed that they are harder and more industrious, will work earlier and later, will defend their home, and withal, are not so irascible as the common bee. To much of this, as well as to their beauty, I can subscribe. But to the last commendation, their gentleness and suavity, I cannot assent. I have had too much evidence of their quick pugnacity to concur.

But I took up my pen to speak of another buzzing, darting, and stinging insect, which seems to have the hardness and fierceness of the white-faced hornet, and the quick sting of the Italian. It is known by different names, as "Gossip," "Slander," "Backbiting," etc.

It seems to frequent all houses, and is at home alike in the hovel and in the saloon of the rich. Who does not fear it? And who has not been stung by it? We all complain of it, fear it, and yet are careful to gather the eggs, and hatch them at our own firesides. Perhaps my reader can recall the times when he has smarted under its infliction.

Without the figure, let us look a moment at the causes of so much evil-speaking, gossip, or slander, even in Christian communities.

1. It is easier to talk about people and the people around us, than about any thing else. Let two neighbors meet, what can they talk about easily? They are not read in history, they have no science to discuss, they are not posted up in politics, they have not any great questions of commerce to discuss, and the world, out of their own circle, is almost unknown. But they do know who are moving, who are making new purchases, and what is going on around them. They see every movement on the checker-board before them. If Mr. A has been cheated in a horse, if Mr. B has bought a very poor cow, if Mr.

C has been very hasty in a bargain, if Mrs. D has a new dress that is "extravagant," or "awfully homely," if young E is becoming rowdyish, and young F has been sent home from college, and if Mrs. G's "help" has left her in "dudgeon," everybody knows it. And why should not everybody talk about these things? It's the easiest way to get up a conversation. It is not of course malice, nor is it intended to be "meddling," but it's taking the readiest way to talk about something which all can talk about. What a dry world it would be if all such wells were closed up. And why should we grudge others the privilege which we claim for ourselves? Let them talk, and remember they *can't* talk about any thing else.

2. There is a little of the crab in us all, so that we do not swim exactly straightforward. In other words, every man has his own weak spot, and there is the shadow of the ludicrous falling upon us all. So that there is hardly a man in the circle of your acquaintance, concerning whom you may not tell something that borders on the ludicrous,

especially if you have a certain knack of setting it off. These weaknesses are common property, and are sure to be held up again and again. We do so. Others do so. And we must expect it to be so concerning ourselves as long as we live; and even after men are dead and buried, these remain, the only immortality on earth which many have. By repetition and accretions, and little embellishments, a small mistake or a small weakness becomes a great affair. I have often heard *facts* stated about myself, which I have found very difficult to identify with any thing in my own experience. Don't others find it so?

3. There is also in the human heart, even the best of hearts, something of jealousy or envy left, and though we would not "for the world" injure the good name of our neighbor, yet we, unconsciously to ourselves, find it difficult not to let the weak points of others be known. We may think it is all in pure good will, or that we are only paying back what we receive, or it may be we don't stop to analyze our motives; but the fact is certain, much of the evil-speaking or gossip, grows

out of envy or jealousy. I am inclined to think that people are seldom conscious of this cause. But the feeling is human, that if we can "level down," we shall do the same thing as if we had elevated ourselves. If Mr. P or Mrs. R have such and such weaknesses or imperfections, what is it but proving that we are as good or better than they? If young S, who is to marry Miss Jones next week, is so and so, and we shake our heads gravely, and "hope it will turn out for the best," what is it but saying that we should never let *our* daughters run such awful risks?

Shall I now as briefly mention how we can do much to cure this evil, and thus prevent a great amount of hard feeling and ill-blood?

Remember that it takes two to slander or gossip—one to speak, and at least one to hear. People often congratulate themselves that they never spread the report, and they never said the hard things or made the insinuations, when they sat and with greedy ears drank it all in and enjoyed it, and the speaker and retailer knew they enjoyed it, notwithstanding-

ing the feeble "I hope it's not so," or, "I can hardly believe it," which they may utter. If none were encouraged by good hearers, all this would be done away. Bear in mind then, that the hearer of slander may often be more guilty than the utterer, seldom less so. If you want to cure the evil, guard your ears as well as your lips.

Set a guard at the door of your lips. When you cross the threshold of your neighbor's door, when you sit down at your own table, make the solemn resolution that you will say nothing about the absent, which you would not be willing to have them hear. It is no less needful at home at the family meal, where a severe or a sour or an envious spirit is often created and nurtured, thoughtlessly no doubt in very many cases, but none the less injurious for that. Happy that family where the table is the place of pleasant, instructive, and social intercourse, without the drawback of severity or the alloy of bitterness.

Resolve that whenever you hear any ill spoken of any one, you will say something good about him; there is no one concerning

whom you cannot honestly do this, if you try. This habit—and I have known such as never did otherwise—will sweeten your own spirit and that of the company. It is like the prophet's casting the branch into the bitter waters. It is bringing the brazen serpent at once, as soon as the serpents begin to bite. Make it a matter of conscience to see what are the teachings of the Bible in regard to the tongue; and see how much danger it carries, what wounds it can inflict, what flames it can kindle, what evils it can create, what miseries it can entail. Make it also a matter of earnest prayer, that you may set a guard at the door of your lips, and become a perfect man, because you offend not with your tongue.

What shall you do when slandered? Bear it in silence. Don't run about to deny or to explain. If the reports are in any measure true, reform, and make them untrue hereafter. This is a kind of bee that you cannot fight. You must be quiet and let it have its buzz, and it may be, sting. But suppose there is not a word of truth in it? So much the better. It will be very easy to live it down in

that case. Remember that *a falsehood wont hurt you*. It is what we *do*, and not what people *say* we do, that hurts us. So long as reports are not founded in truth, they do little hurt. They have no sting. Never be worried at any thing which you have not actually done. A great truth that.

## VI.

## HOME MISSIONS AT HOME.

ONE of the most difficult problems which a pastor has to ponder over is, how to carry the gospel to that part of our population who attend no church. The uniform testimony is, that only from one-third to one-half of the people attend upon the services of the sanctuary. I may have my church crowded, and every seat in it taken, and yet leave a great mass outside who have no Sabbath home, and no place of public worship. We have two classes of these: first, those who live away from the centre of the town or village; and secondly, the foreign population. These are usually gathered into families, and parents and children are alike neglected. For the last few years there have been anxious inquiries, "What shall we do to carry the gospel to the destitute among ourselves?" The question is not, Are they *necessarily* destitute? we must accept the fact. That my brethren

in the ministry very extensively and deeply feel this, I have evidence enough from numerous letters I have received on the subject, and from public documents. May I therefore venture to throw out a few hints to my ministerial brethren, and to their churches? I will try to do it in such a way that no one will feel the power of censure.

Many towns were laid out when it was thought that it would require a great deal of land to support a few families. I have been told that in olden times a committee from the legislature, having gone over and viewed a territory, reported that they thought the "said territory" might, at furthest, support "*thirty* families." There are now nearly or quite forty thousand on "the said territory," and room enough for more. A town, we will suppose, is six miles square. This takes the outer line of boundary three, and the corners four miles from the centre. The ark and the sanctuary are in the centre, and the light from the golden candlestick reaches about two miles from the centre: that is, all within a radius of two miles are most likely to go to public wor-

ship. Then beyond that is the third mile—a territory into which those who have less means, or energy, or ambition, the discouraged and the peculiar, flow and settle. They, for some reason or other, have not the energy or the means to keep up with the rest of the town. New buildings and new paint and marks of thrift are not abundant. The population settles down, and this generation is much like the preceding. Then on the borders of the next town is a similar belt and a similar population, making a belt of two miles in width around every town, where the power of the gospel cannot well penetrate. It is here, away from the eyes of the multitude, the Evil One tempts the men to roam the fields, to fish in the streams; and the women and children to dress up somewhat, and talk, or to spend the Sabbath in reading a very little and sleeping much. But comparatively few from these belts wait on God in his sanctuary; and it is in these belts that we find the great numbers who do not attend church.

Then again, we have a large foreign population, chiefly in factories, who have few sym-

pathies with us, and have little to do with our Sabbath privileges. What our duties to this class are, I do not propose to speak of in this place. I shall confine myself to our native population. How shall we give the gospel to those who do not voluntarily come to the house of God? To that point I wish to speak.

For more than thirty years of country pastorship I have given my thoughts and anxieties to this question, and have made not a few experiments.

Knowing the want of reading, I have tried many ways of reaching them through the press. One year I procured and had sold three hundred Christian Almanacs in as many different families. The next year, more still. For years I went into the monthly tract distribution, and saw that every family in town willing to receive one, should have it monthly. In a time of revival I had eight hundred of "Baxter's Call to the Unconverted" distributed in a single week. Another week I had eight hundred of "Edwards' Sabbath Manual" distributed into as many families. Then

I have tried religious papers, weekly or monthly. It may be true, and probably is true, that there were results, great and many, from all these efforts, which will not be known till the last great day. But so far as I knew them, they fell far short of my hopes ; and these experiments were made during a long number of years, and in different towns.

One can see that if we could get this population to come to the centre and attend public worship, our end would be better accomplished. And why can we not do that ?

Because, first, most of these families are not religiously trained. They have not the Christian conscience. You have no capital to trade with. Then many, very many, really can't get to the meeting in the centre. I speak especially of women and children. If the father of a family cannot or will not provide a team and drive it, what can his family do ? You may say that if a silver dollar were to be placed in the pew of each one every time he went to the house of God, they would all be there. So they would ; but the argument is hardly a fair one, inasmuch as they

may well reply, "Give us the dollar, and we could then have the means to be carried to the church." You may say that very many more might go than now do. That is also true; but very many really can't go. They are aged, they are feeble, they are females, or they are children. Sometimes, here and there, a family lives in this belt who do and will get out, and are true and faithful at church; and very precious people they are. But are they not the exceptions? In the snowy, stormy regions, all the winter they are shut up; and even in the heat of summer, I have often seen and pitied females walking three or four miles to and from church.

The more you become personally acquainted with the people in these outer districts, the more will your sympathies be drawn out towards them, the more you will feel that they have many real excuses which you have never thought of. They are not called together often enough to draw out and cultivate the social principle; they have no occasions to arouse and move them; they have not the taste and the cultivation to enable them to draw from

books; they are in a slow world by themselves. They are usually kind, inoffensive, simple people; they don't feel a positive repugnance to the gospel, for they don't come in contact with it so as to feel the pricking of the sword. They are just what you and I would be, brought up as they were, and living where they do. I have seldom received the least insult from one of them. But they are there, without being reached by the gospel: how shall we reach them? In my next I shall touch the middle of the question.

## VII.

## HOME MISSIONS AT HOME.

HE who studies the human heart and labors to do it good, grows more and more deeply impressed with the wisdom of God in using the human voice as the great instrument of doing his work. An angel would make a poor preacher, because his heart and ours could not be brought into sympathy. *The sympathy of the heart is the great human instrument of doing good.* Hence a warm, blundering man will often make more friends and influence men far more, than a cold, correct man, with double his talents.

There are, to my mind, but two hopeful methods of adequately reaching the outskirts of our towns. These are by the ministry, and by the church-members. To explain what I mean, I give our method—not claiming that it is the wisest or the best, but as the best we have found. There is no difficulty in establishing meetings all over a town in a sea-

son of revival. But we want something that shall be constantly and uniformly acting on the population. In such times too, there is no difficulty in getting the "brethren" to go out and attend prayer-meetings. The difficulty is, they soon stop. The experience of my life leads me to say, I have never known any meeting to be maintained from year to year, *unless the minister was in the habit of being present.*

We have in this town twelve district school-houses, each of which is more than a mile from the centre, and where the people want religious meetings—especially preaching. We have four ministers, of three denominations, who cheerfully unite in this work. Every Tuesday evening there are four meetings and sermons in the outer parts of the town. We follow each other, going round with the sun, regularly. The man who preaches in the east school-house to-night, knows he is to go to the next south of that next week. This gives each district a sermon once in three weeks. Then we preach a lecture in the centre on Wednesday evening, and

attend our prayer-meeting on Friday evening. In this way we give all parts of the town an opportunity to hear the gospel. Every week we form some new acquaintance among them. Every week we gain a little in the confidence and love of the community, and every week the people feel more and more that they are not outsiders. I do not believe a single word has been dropped by any minister, on these occasions, by which you would know to what denomination he belonged.

My brethren will say that this is a heavy burden to lay upon them, in addition to all that they now have to do. I allow it. And yet, if they don't do it, nobody will, and we shall go on mourning that so many of the people neglect the house of God. There are two ways of lightening this burden, and at the same time increasing the efficiency of the meetings. Suppose the pastor has to go forty times a year to these preaching places. Let him select, say ten of his best men, Christian men, and who have Christian *horses*, and ask them to agree to go and carry him to these meetings, each in his turn. It will be one a

month. *This is a very important point.* First, the pastor has a good visit with his friend, in going and coming. Secondly, it greatly encourages the people in the school-house to see a layman with the pastor. They feel that one more heart sympathizes with them. And thirdly, it does much to save the life of the minister. I have caught more terrible colds after having preached in the heated school-house, and then having to drive home, than in any other way. After *speaking* in the evening, it is not very safe to ride some three or four miles; and especially not, unless you can wrap up warm. I fear my brethren often suffer so much in this way, that they dread the very thought of the exposure. The kind friend, who does not have to preach, is comparatively safe. I have found my young men very cheerful and ready to go with me thus. And I presume every church would furnish all that are needed.

Another point. I have often gone to a school-house, off at a distance, and found that we could have no singing, because we had no hymn-books. Perhaps there would be one

book, Methodist, or Baptist, or Congregationalist in its origin. And we can't contrive to sing with one book; and a meeting without singing is ruined. If the people can't take part enough in it to sing, it is a dead set, and the meeting is apt to be lost. To remedy this, I procured a beautiful black-walnut box which will just hold *fifteen* of the "Songs of Zion," a little book of hymns and music, published by the American Tract Society. I find this number sufficient. Having a handle to my box, it is very portable. In the beginning of the meeting I distribute the books, and at its close have them handed back—to be used the next week somewhere else. The preaching should be very plain, clear, simple, and *warm*. You must talk with the same confidence and love you would in your family, and you will gain and carry their sympathies.

But the second thing needed is, as many Sabbath-schools in these districts as you can possibly attend to. They are appendages to the central school. They are shoots of the same tree. We have more in number in these mission schools than we have in the centre of

the town. I think almost any church could readily double the number of her pupils. Every district would furnish more than attend the day school. The difficulty is not to find scholars, but teachers. To each mission school there should be a superintendent; and generally he had better be from the centre. Some of these would need an infant class. Beautiful gems are these schools, for a church to wear as an ornament to her neck.

Were I to attempt to mark out a plan by which to reach the destitute among us, I would have,

1. A meeting *statedly*, as often as the ministers could attend them, in every school-house that is over a mile or a mile and a half from the centre.
2. These meetings *not* to be more seldom than once in three weeks.
3. I would have some good Christian brother always take the pastor; and if he is a *singer*, so much the better.
4. I would have a Sabbath-school established in every such district. Why is it not as much needed as the day school?

5. I would have a good book-case in each school-house, under a strong lock and key. The book-case should contain a library sufficient for the population, children and adults, and also hymn-books enough, so that parents and children could learn to sing. I believe I have never failed to have singing in such a meeting when we had books.

Such is as near the plan I want as I can describe, with one very important addition: *I would have the active Christians of the several churches unite, and once a year visit every family in the town*, and talk kindly about their souls, and where not forbidden, pray with and for them. The good that may be done in this way is incalculable. Had I room I should love to narrate some of our experience in this line of labor. It is like pouring the water of life over a whole community.

Some have said that if you carry these meetings to these outer places, it will satisfy them, so that they will never want to come to church on Sabbath. My own experience does not teach me so. My Sabbath congregations are never so full as when I am laboring most

for the remoter parts of the town. Giving them a little bread does not make them satisfied with that little.

It has been said, It will do no good ; these labors do not result in the conversion of souls, at least not often. I reply, Suppose it be so ; suppose you go and preach thus year after year, and not a soul is converted ; *the fact that you have offered them salvation is abundant compensation.* Having done this truly, kindly, and faithfully, you have discharged your duty, and will receive your reward.

It will do no good to say, and keep saying, "We *must* do something for our destitute population." Here is a plan which you can try, and drop it the moment you devise a better one. But do something ; do it, *do it.*

It will do no good to exhort your church "rouse up ;" here is something *definite* for them to *do.* Will they do it? If they *will*, they will grow warm by the exercise. If they will *not*, how much of vitality have they?

While we rejoice over the sheep in the fold, let us also think much about those scattered on the mountains.

## VIII.

## OUR FRIENDS.

IN one of the volumes of Walter Scott's writings, he represents a Highland chief on trial for his life for treason. It was most manifest that he had staked his all upon the throw, and must now lose his head. Just before receiving his sentence, one of his clan—the clan of McIvor—rises up and urges that he and other poor fellows may be put to death, and their young chieftain spared. And from what we know of the strong attachment of these once wild clans, we have no doubt that a dozen would have been ready to die for the natural head of the clan. On the other hand, the love of the chief to his clan was hardly less. He would impoverish himself, and divide his last loaf of barley bread with his followers, and even lay down his life for them.

The human heart wants some one to sympathize with, to counsel with, and to confide in and love. A dog can meet but a part of

these wants; but even he makes himself beloved. We want to give and to receive. This is called "having a *friend*;" and when found, the heart has found a treasure.

Lord Bacon says that the friendships in the world are very few. Acquaintances are made and forgotten all the way through life, and many go through life without any thing more, without ever knowing the high and beautiful and almost sacred meaning of the word friend. In the early and rude states of society, when strength of body, or fleetness of foot, or animal courage, is the standard of manhood, the one who can protect the feeble, defend the weak, and command the wavering, is the national leader. These qualities are accepted as friendship. The weak one loves the strong because he can defend him; and by an organic law of our nature, the strong one loves those whom he protects.

So strong is the yearning of the human heart for a true friend—one in whom you can confide, who can sympathize with you, to whom you can reveal the secrets and the weaknesses of the heart, who will betray

nothing because he loves you, who will sympathize with all your secret troubles—that the highest stations of earth will not exempt men from the craving. Kings and emperors, queens and empresses want such a friend ; and it is a curious fact that the deepest, purest, warmest friendship is often between men in all respects very unequal. Indeed warm friends are very seldom equals ; kings do not select kings for their friends. When Jonathan, heir to a crown, wants a friend, he does not seek him among the princes, but finds him in David, the stripling son of a shepherd. Their friendship was a model : Jonathan would strip himself of his kingdom for his friend, and yet David loved him the most and wept the longest as they separated, never more on earth to renew their friendship. When David comes to the throne he wants a friend, but he does not select a king, nor Ahithophel, the wisest man of his generation ; but Hushai, the friend that ventured his life for him, and whose friendship never waned nor abated. Even Solomon—the wise, the great, the rich, and the splendid—needs a friend. He selects no

monarch ; but takes Zabud the son of Nathan as his bosom-friend. Alexander had the same yearning of heart ; but among all his brave generals he finds none : it is Parmenio whom he admits to his bosom. The fact that thousands have been deceived by having the chosen friend prove false, does not in the least prevent our seeking for friends. It is remarkable that Paul, one of the most unselfish hearts, and one who lived as far above the ordinary wants of humanity as any one ever did live, felt this same need, and selected Timothy, "none other like-minded," "his own son in the faith," as his friend. And it is affecting to hear him calling for this friend to come unto him during his last imprisonment at Rome. "The time of my departure is at hand." "Do thy diligence to come unto me." We have often wondered whether Timothy did reach him before he was "offered," and hear his last counsels, and witness his last devotions. And it is still more remarkable that our Saviour, instead of living in the solitude of his own infinite nature, had his human sympathies in such activity that he selected John, the most

amiable of all his disciples, to be his bosom-friend.

When I say that the human heart yearns for some one true friend, I do not by any means intend to affirm that every one has found that friend. Some, having been deceived or forgotten by those whom they loved, go through life friendly to all, with kind words to all, yet keeping the chambers of the heart empty, not finding any guest whom they want to install there. And as civilization advances, and as artificial manners increase, the instances of real heart friendships will, I fear, be fewer and rarer. Such a state of society keeps those who are equals together, and compels them to associate together; whereas the strongest friend you will ever find will be greatly your superior or your inferior. These inequalities may be inequalities of talents, of education, position, or wealth, or any thing else. Daniel Webster and John Trout were warm friends. The strong, bullying school-boy will often take to some feeble, puny fellow, and they become fast friends. The nobleman, from his position shut away from friends, makes his valet his

friend ; and a king has been known to do this of his barber.

The offices of a friend are among the most difficult that we can be called upon to perform. You want a friend for sympathy, and he must therefore have a warm heart ; you want him for advice, and he must therefore have a sound judgment ; you want him to know what to all others are unknown—the very secrets of your heart ; you want him to bear with your weaknesses without being disgusted, with your moods and nervousness without being offended or wearied. He must have courage and conscience, or else he will not help you to amend your faults and suppress your infirmities ; he must have a deep watchfulness, or else he will not cheer you when you need, and commend you when you do well ; he must have skill to encourage you when you waver or grow weak, keep you from acting on impulses, and the manliness to defend you, as far as is right, when assailed, or to excuse you where he may not defend. Solomon describes such a one in few words : “A friend loveth at all times”—when we are in

prosperity, and when we are in adversity; when we are admired, and when we are scorned; when we are courted, and when neglected; when in riches, and when in poverty; in joy, or in sorrow; elated or depressed; agreeable or dyspeptic; for sometimes the tides and the winds will all be in your favor, and sometimes they will set against you. He "loveth at all times." We fear not many would meet this definition. "A brother is born for adversity," but "there is a friend who sticketh closer than a brother;" that is, in the hour of our troubles we naturally turn to our relations, our blood relations, and yet there is such a thing as "a friend" who will do more for us than our own relations. How many young men in setting out in life, how many amid the changes and troubles of life, turn to the friend for assistance and relief rather than to relatives. When Job was in his deepest sorrows his own relatives all forsook him, and it was his three friends who came to comfort him.

## IX.

## WHY WE LOSE OUR FRIENDS.

ONE of the most sad things in our earthly experience is, that we must lose friends. We seldom make a friend through our design and planning, but we are thrown into the society of this and that one, and there is something between us that draws us together. For the want of a better name, we call this sympathy. We hardly know how or why we are drawn together, and it is sometimes a long time before we know where the line between acquaintance and friendship lies. It is not necessary that our friend be of the same age, of the same temperament, or the same any thing. His traits of character may be the very opposite of ours. We need make no special effort to make friends, but rather to keep them when made.

We lose our friends in four different ways.

First, by death. Few mourners are more sincere than those who mourn the death of a

true friend. The most beautiful elegy in human language was over a friend, David's lament over Jonathan. As we advance in life, one and another drop away, and if not careful, we shall be left like the heath in the desert when the waters are dried up.

Secondly, we lose them by separation. For a time we are near them, and see them often, and converse with them, or we write them often. But new cares and duties, labors and anxieties crowd in upon us, new relations are formed, and new scenes open upon us. We determine to retain our friends, but our time is occupied, and gradually and almost inevitably our friends fade from our memories, not wholly, but certainly. A few years makes the beautiful writing which they placed on our heart very faint. We regret it, and are ashamed of it, and mourn over it; but if the prospect is that we shall never live near them again, we despair of recovering what we have lost. How different we feel about retaining the friendship of one who has gone to Europe for a few months, from what we feel if we know he never expects to return?

Thirdly, we lose our friends by forming new ties. This is especially true of woman when she comes into the married relation. The young wife takes her pen to write to her "dear Lavinia," but she at once feels that they have now very little in common. She feels that it would be almost sacrilege to allow any one to live between her and her husband. But this is not precisely what I mean. I mean that the new ties between husband and wife bring so many new duties and responsibilities, and so many delightful hopes and promises, that the heart naturally gathers around these, and shuts out all others. And the young husband and wife will permit me to drop an important remark; and that is, that as the marriage relation so commonly and so necessarily cuts away all other ties and confidences, and gives the heart and the soul no counsellor but the life companion, how important that they be fitted for each other—that the wife should be qualified by disposition, education, and training, to take the place of all other friends, and be qualified to be a sympathizer, an adviser, and an assistant, so that by her judg-

ment she can counsel, by her courage sustain, by her gentleness soften, and by her unselfish affection cheer and comfort. It is the *man* who is to meet the storms of life, and manage and do all the rough labors of earth, and who will be thwarted and troubled by the strong swimmers whom he will encounter; and *he* needs a friend. If he finds it in his wife, he may never tell of his obligations to her, but he will be successful. If he finds it not, he will go through life shut up in his own icy heart, an Iceland without its grandeur.

Fourthly, we lose our friends by our own ingratitude. Can you not recall the man who has greatly befriended you in days that are gone by, who assisted you to what you needed and when you needed? But a sense of obligation is painful. The hardest thing for the human heart to do is to be grateful, and the next hardest thing perhaps, is to be willing to acknowledge obligation and manifest gratitude. Hence, many friends have been dropped, in order to escape a sense of obligation. On the other hand, the heart is sometimes so chilled by this want of gratitude, so

grieved to see it a burden, that it drops what it called a friend. The fact that we do meet with ingratitude where we had hoped to find love and confidence, is unquestionable. We are disappointed and chilled, and think we shall hardly try again to manifest kindness. The story of the cuckoo exactly illustrates what we have too often witnessed in our own observation :

“The spring was come, and the nest was made,  
And the little bird all her eggs had laid,  
When a cuckoo came to the door to beg  
She would kindly adopt another egg ;  
For I have not leisure, upon my word,  
To attend to such things, said the roving bird.  
There was hardly room for them all in the nest,  
But the egg was admitted along with the rest ;  
And the foster-birds played their part so well,  
That soon the young cuckoo had chipped the shell :  
For the silly birds, they could not see  
That their foster-chick their plague would be ;  
But so big and saucy the cuckoo grew,  
That no peace at last in the nest they knew :  
He pecked and he hustled the old birds about ;  
And as for the young ones, he jostled them out,  
Till at length they summoned their friends to their aid.  
Wren, robin, and sparrow, not one delayed,  
And joining together, neighbor with neighbor,  
They drove out the cuckoo with infinite labor.  
But the cuckoo was fledged, and laughed to see  
How they vainly traced him from tree to tree :  
They had nursed him so well, he was grown the stronger,  
**And now he needed their help no longer.”**

*Moral*, to our purpose :

“ Give no place, or power, or trust to one  
Who will make an ill use of what he has won ;  
For when you have reared the cuckoo-guest,  
‘T will be hard to drive him out of the nest ;  
And harder still, when away he’s flown,  
To hunt down the cuckoo, now fully grown.”

Among the frequent and beautiful mysteries which we meet in the Bible, is this yearning of the soul after something which we call friend. It is the soul feeling after something without herself. We can’t call it a mark of human weakness, because it is something which the Son of God himself felt. “ All ye will forsake me this night, and leave me alone ; and yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me.” Can no nature be so exalted that it will not need some one to love, and by him be loved again ? Is this a reason why the archangel loves to minister to the feeblest child of the dust, and why the angels carried the spirit of Lazarus to Abraham’s bosom, and why the angels of little children are spoken of as being in the presence of God, that is, all created beings in heaven love even the little child in its feebleness ?

And what is more wonderful still, the infinite God himself manifests this same yearning of the heart. Three times he calls Abraham his "friend." More than once Christ calls his disciples "friends;" and does not this feeling, which probably runs through all creation, and which exists in the Godhead, enter into the great fact that God loved and redeemed this world? Does it not lie at the foundation of all that holds society together? It is as old as time, and probably as old as eternity. It is deeper even than the marriage relation. It was this that brought the Son of God from the bosom of the Father, that he might make and raise up friends whom he could love, and who would eternally love him.

We can't understand this, because *we* can't love two friends alike, and equally. Our natures are too limited. Not so with God. He can love uncounted friends; and thus, out of all ages and nations and languages, he can gather friends, "a multitude which no man can number." They will all be friends. And how beautifully does the gospel give us a friend to love, the Bridegroom of the heart,

who has loved us, and does love us, and will love us, to whom we may confide all our secrets, who will bear our burdens, share our sorrows, and comfort our griefs. Ah, yes; the soul yearns after a friend, and thus she will find one, and be with Him, nearer and nearer to him for ever. It is not such an emotion as exists between husband and wife, parent and child, brother and sister. It is what we term friendship, for the want of a better term; that which made Christ die for his own, and which makes them take joyfully the spoiling of their goods, and to rejoice that they are accounted worthy to suffer for his name's sake. And to eternity will this reciprocal affection grow and increase, and will bring us into communion with Christ, firm as the throne of God, permanent as eternity, and sweet as the waters which flow in rivers of joy at God's right hand.

## X.

## A MINISTER WANTED.

THRIFTYVILLE wants a minister. They are looking far and near to find one; but they want the "right man." Thriftyville is not one of your old, effete places. It is a place grown up quickly on Rapid river, in the beautiful valley of Eureka. It is a very important place, standing directly over the centre of the earth, so that if a hole were dug, and a stone dropped into it, it would pass through the very centre of this great world. It has a growing population, and boasts of "a circle of *very* intelligent people." Moreover, it seems to be "the centre of a great moral influence," and it now wants a minister second to none. They want to get the society out of debt, to repair the old wastes which time has already made in their half-built sanctuary, to gather in the young, to "draw" a full house, and to make the concern every way prosperous and respectable, and easy to support.

Now for the qualifications desired. They are so few and simple, that “the right man” probably stands at your elbow!

*Item.* He must be a man mature in intellect, and ripe in experience; and yet, so young that all the young people will rush after him.

*Item.* He must be quick, ardent, flashing, nervous in temperament, so that he may kindle quick and burn bright, prompt, ready, and wide awake; and yet a man of the most consummate prudence, whose nerves shall never be unstrung, nor out of tune.

*Item.* He must be a man of great, burning zeal, so that he can startle, arouse, and kindle, and move the congregation; and yet, so cautious, so cool, that he is always safe, calm, self-possessed, unperturbed.

*Item.* He must have the power to awaken and arouse the church; and yet, let them be quiet and look on while he does all that is done for Christ.

*Item.* He must urge and move men, and lead the whole people to salvation, and get them all into the church; and yet be so judicious that he can make a difference between

the chaff and the wheat, and let none but real converts into the fold.

*Item.* He must be strong and original in the pulpit, and bring none but beaten oil there; and yet, be at leisure to receive any call, any interruption, be prepared for every occasion, and like the town pump, never sucking for water, or giving out dry.

*Item.* He must be a workman who shall go down deep into the mines of truth, and quarry out its pillars, and set them up, and make men come and wrestle around them; and yet, the most gifted man in light conversation, and on all that floats in the every-day world around him.

*Item.* He must have health, so that his body never wearies, his nerves never quiver, a real specimen of muscular Christianity; and yet, a hard, severe thinker, a close reasoner, and a most diligent student, getting his books from any quarter.

*Item.* He must be poor in this world's goods, to show that money is not his object, and so that he can sympathize with the poor, and can't help feeling humble and dependent; and yet his family must be the most hospita-

ble, and entertain more company than any other in town ; his children must be second to none in education and training ; they must be respectably dressed ; he must give away more, and more cheerfully, than any man in the place, not even excepting Esquire Rich himself, and his family must all be models, in all respects, for the community.

*Item.* He must be a man who can be permanent, thought vastly superior to Dr. Solid of the next town, who has been with his flock over thirty years ; and his congregation must hear the same voice, on the same subject, several times every week ; and yet he must come every time as original, as fresh, as glowing as if it were done but once a year.

*Item.* He must be able to live in a glass house, always acting in public, coming in contact with all sorts of men and of prejudices, so original that all will respect and fear him ; and yet never odd, eccentric, morose, repulsive, or awing in manners. He should have the lofty attributes of an angel, with the sympathies, the gentleness, and softness of the little child.

*Item.* He must be always ready, lofty, keyed up to do the best possible; and yet so calm in spirit and word and look, that nothing can disturb the repose.

*Item.* He must never preach so that the people are not proud of him when they have a stranger in their pew, or so that the echo of his sermon shall not come back when he goes abroad; and yet, every sermon must be so beautiful, that all the young people will admire it and wonder over it, and the little child can carry it all home and repeat it to her grandmother.

*Item.* His wife must be the model of all models. She must be young and handsome, but not indiscreet or vain. She must be worthy of the admiration of all the people, and yet be really the humblest of all. She must watch and discipline and prune and lead and *make* her husband the embodiment of all excellency, but she must never be aware of her power, lest she become overbearing. She must be the model of a lady, have a fair face and white hands, though compelled to do all the work of her family. She must be ready

to meet everybody with a smile, take her hands from the flour at any moment, wear a checked apron, and still be dressed like a lady. Her face must never be otherwise than cheerful, her head must do its aches in secret, and she must give none occasion to call her extravagant, or to call her mean. She must be able to alter the same dress four times, turning it thrice, and fitting it to a smaller child each time. She will be expected to be the very life of the great Dorcas Society, the most zealous member of the All-Labor Society, the very backbone of the Maternal Association, the warm leader in the Female Prayer-meeting, the head and mover in the Reading Circle, and the visitor-general of the poor. She will be expected to be at all the prayer-meetings, and let how many soever brethren be present, she will be looked to to set the tune for each hymn. As she receives no salary, of course her other qualifications are not so important, *though the above are essential.*

*Item.* The minister must be sound in doctrine, able to lay his hands on the foundations

of truth, to fortify and defend the hill of Zion ; and yet, must never preach the old-fashioned doctrines. They are not spicy. They are not taking. They will never “draw” a full house.

*Item.* It is rather *desirable* that he should be a pious man, and one who loves his Master ; and yet, as this article, *piety*, has not acquired great value in Thriftyville, it would be well for him not to make that too obtrusive.

Such, in few words, is the man they want for Thriftyville. If they can light on him, they will pay *five hundred dollars* annually ! and not let it run behind unreasonably. This is not, to be sure, half what their clerks receive, but they think that the minister, if he be only the “right” man, can “manage” to live on it. Who is ready ?

N. B. All applicants must put an extra postage-stamp in the letter, or it will receive no attention.

## XI.

## SPIRITUAL INDIGESTION.

WE sometimes meet with one who has a fair appetite, no sallowness in the face, no alarming cough, no hectic flush on the cheek, and yet he gradually grows weak, and seems to waste away, we hardly know how. It is plain that he does not digest his food, and assimilate it with the system. One-half of what he eats, could it be made into flesh and bone, would make him a strong man. The physician perhaps prescribes stimulants, and they give a momentary renewal of strength, but it does not abide. The man wastes faster than he renews.

It seems to be so with some churches. There is the church in Oldenville, which I have known for more than a quarter of a century. They have had six pastors in a little more than twenty years, and are now without a pastor. These six men have carried there and spread over the people a great variety and

a great amount of mind. Some of them have been eminent men, and none inferior. They have had the slow and the quick, the phlegmatic and the mercurial, the heavy columbiad and the light artillery. Sometimes they have taken stimulants, in the shape of revivalists and extraordinary measures—had spiritual spasms. But still the church and congregation don't grow strong. There are good men among them—very good; but as a body, they are apparently weaker from year to year. They have had first-rate preaching as a general thing, but from some cause or other, their spiritual digestion is not good. They don't grow strong, don't feel strong. A spiritual lassitude rests upon them. They have, I fear, depended upon stimulants too much. They seem to have forgotten that stimulants are for men “ready to perish,” and tonics are not really food; that galvanizing a man, though it may make him open his eyes for a moment, and even laugh, does not give him life. They want the power to digest all the good preaching which they have had.

Will the good people of Oldenville take it

kindly if I give them a few hints how they may get out of this state; for unless they do get out, they will be as weak, to say the least, a quarter of a century hence as they are now. If I tell them some hard truths, I will try to tell them in a soft way.

1. Get you a pastor as soon as may be, but not in such a hurry that you take a man whom you have heard but once. The relation between pastor and people, like that between husband and wife, should be founded on acquaintance, esteem, respect, and love. Don't depend on hiring a preacher by the month, or by the year. Depend upon it, such a man, be he ever so good, will leave you at the first good call, or at the first cold wind that blows over and among you. He cannot have the power of a pastor, cannot feel like one, pray like one, act like one, be like one. No man but a pastor can pray with a pastor's heart. If you have ever known a church and society grow, under this system of hiring different men and for short periods, your experience has been different from mine.

2. I would counsel you to get a young

man for your next pastor. To be sure he will be a young man, and very likely he will make mistakes, and very likely you will miss that maturity of thought and teaching which you have had so long, and which seems to have done you so little good. But he will have courage, and he will have zeal, and he will not be trammelled by experience, and he will move onward. But there is a thought of more worth than all this, and that is, a young man can get at and influence the *young* as no other can. The youth loves to read Henry Kirke White because White was a youth, thought as a youth, and wrote as a youth. In many cases, I should advise a church to seek a full-grown, mature mind in their pastor. But you need a young man. And when you get him, you must bear with him, make allowances for his inexperience, and feel sure that the wear and tear of life will make him conservative enough ere long. Remember that the three great laws of health are, *plain diet*, *regular exercise*, and the *open air*. Therefore don't put your minister up to make great mental strains, and to give you great "intellectual treats." If he gives

you plain instruction, and not too much at once, it is all you require.

3. Encourage your minister, when you have one, to give you *expository* preaching one-half of every Sabbath. It will seem dull at first, but in a short time you will relish it—the sincere milk of the word. Don't wait for the milk to be made into butter and cheese. Take it as milk. You can digest this. You have had too much labored, anvil-wrought preaching. The stomach is in an abnormal state. Expository preaching will bring it back to a healthy condition. This is “the plain food” which it seems to me you require.

4. Encourage and aid your minister to devote much of his thought to the young, the children and youth. Excuse me if I hint that he can make of these something which he cannot make out of you, something unlike you, if possible. Help him to gather them into the Sabbath-school, and into the Bible class. Let him lay the foundation of what will, in fifteen or twenty years, become a strong and vigorous church. His very youth will be an immense advantage to him here. It is his hope.

5. Then for "exercise" and "open air," the means are at hand. Come out more willingly, promptly, regularly, and cheerfully to your weekly prayer-meeting. Go to work in the Sabbath-school; help your minister to establish and sustain "mission Sunday-schools" in different parts of your town. Keep your library full of books. Let the children through the town see that you are taking them up in your arms and blessing them. Take air and exercise regularly in the devotions and the activities of the church. You are rusting; you are perishing for the want of air and exercise. How few of you go to the prayer-meeting; and how few to the monthly concert! Up, brethren, take air and exercise.

6. *Give* more liberally. It is a beautiful way of taking the air. You breathe more freely after every such exercise of giving. Don't do it by spasms, but as a regular thing. Your prayers will be better. You can't send an arrow that will pierce the skies if your right hand is employed in grasping your purse. "Give without *grudging*." Alas, how little of such giving is there in the world!

7. Have faith in the gospel, in the mission of the church, in the power of Christians to reach and save men. You are the light of the world; rekindle that light, by renewing the oil. To work then, and begin at the bottom. And then "*they that shall be of thee* shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in."

## XII.

*A MODEL SUPERINTENDENT.*

It is no fancy sketch that I am about to draw. Friends may overestimate the worth of their departed friends; but I have the belief that a Christian pastor, who is cheered by what is good and tried by what is evil in man, will not be likely to fall into the mistake.

The man of whom I am speaking has lately been called away from us—cut off suddenly in the strength of his manhood, in the height of his usefulness, and in the fulness of the Christian confidence which surrounded him.

He came to us from the city of New York, where he had long been engaged in the ragged schools, and in holding up the cross—often alone—in places where it was least welcome. He who serves a long and faithful apprenticeship, will be most likely to become an expert workman. His apprenticeship had been in the ravines and dark places which are found at the base of Mount Zion, and many were

those, who belonged to that city, called “sought out,” and whom he led up to the gates of Zion.

Picture to yourself a man nervous in temperament, quick in every movement, with a face radiant with cheerfulness, and with a bright eye, that looked as if it never wanted to slumber—a man whose heart could be, and always was warm, without the drawback of a head proportionably weak. You never felt a chill in the atmosphere where he was; you felt that you were breathing air untainted by selfishness; and you knew that whatever you asked of him—time, money, labor, self-denial, or any thing else for the cause of Christ—you would have a response prompt, quick, and decisive. I never made a request of him to which he did not instantly and cheerfully respond, and my great fear was that the free horse would be overworked, that we should put the load of the elephant upon a back really feeble. I fear we often did so. Just a week before he died, he took his horse and carriage and carried me to a distant school-house, where I was to preach, and where he sung.

Had he known that it was his last meeting, he could not have led the singing more tenderly or beautifully. I did not know then that his sweet voice would so soon be waking the notes of praise in heaven.

His great work, with us, was the establishing and maintaining till his death, a model mission Sabbath-school, in a distant part of the town. How soon he acquired the love and confidence of the parents and of the children. They belonged to different denominations; they were born in different countries; but he gathered them all into Bible classes, common classes, and infant classes. There was neither Greek nor Jew here. I doubt whether it occurred to him from Sabbath to Sabbath to what denomination his teachers belonged. He established a good library, procured singing books for the whole school, and instructed them all how to sing. It was a luxury to hear that school sing; and it was a very touching sight when that school, infants and all, attended his funeral, and stood in two rows, as his body was carried between them, with their little badges of mourning

pinned to the left shoulder, with their young heads dropping on their breasts, and their eyes welling over with tears that came up from the heart. There is something most beautiful in the simple and sincere tribute to worth, when childhood weeps. Nothing but unselfish, kind, and cheerful labor can procure such a tribute. The teachers who aided him caught much of his wide-awake, unselfish, and gladdened spirit. When all things else were fading, as the angel of death entered his chamber, the last thing he inquired for and about was his beloved school.

He loved children without having to *try* to do it. That kind of freemasonry of love which children are quick to understand, gathered them around him. Hence for years he was the mainspring and centre of the large "Band of Hope" which was formed here to aid the cause of temperance. Whoever else might droop or sag, he was a live man—a sort of Christian "Wide-awake." He loved the church, he loved missions, he loved every tree that grew on the banks of the River of Life, whatever might be the shape of the

leaves that were for the healing of the nations. When gathering money for the tract cause—for this department was especially committed to him—you would think he had faith in this way of doing good alone; so at the concert for prayer, it did one good to unite with him as he gathered up the wants and sorrows of the human family, and poured them out before the throne.

Doubtless he had imperfections, weaknesses, and faults; but I honestly believe that when he died he had not an enemy in the world. If all men did not speak well of him, none spoke evil. If he had not the highest human perfection, he had little of what may be called “drawbacks” in his character. When the great congregation, on the week-day, gathered at his funeral, all received the impression that nothing but a great amount of Christian character could call forth such a multitude, and nothing short of great worth could win so much respect and love. What a beautiful thing it is to live in the respect, the confidence, and the love of the whole community; and what a character is produced by a

long-continued contact with children! It softens without weakening; it stamps childhood's gladness on the heart, without its foibles; it bathes the spirit in fresh dews, and keeps the heart warm by pure love. It seems to me that Moses' face would always have shone, could he have had to do only with children.

Our loss is great. Paul had many helpers, good and true men; but of Timothy he says, he has "none other like-minded." His tomb is not among us, and the little feet of our children cannot walk around it; but he will long live in our memory, the earnest, the cheerful, the loving superintendent and faithful teacher. The present generation will not cease gratefully to remember the name of WILLIAM P. WARRINER.

## XIII.

## KEEPING THE SABBATH.

WE should all *like* to have somebody do what can never be done, that is, tell us just what duties we are to perform each Sabbath, as it returns. We should then know when we had kept the day and performed our duty. It would be easy to know when we had done our duty, if some one could tell us just how many chapters were to be read, just how many minutes were to be spent in secret prayer, just how much time in the house of God, just how much we are to give in charity, and the like.

We can't do this. We can't tell you just the hour you shall rise or go to bed, what you shall eat or wear. All this must be left to the conscience, enlightened, as it should be, by the Bible. The circumstances of men are so different, that what one does, and thereby fulfils a duty, would be sin in other circumstances. Who could teach the physician to

keep the Sabbath by rules? A very good but simple Christian once said to a sea-captain:

“Sir, I trust you don’t sail your vessel on the Sabbath, do you?”

“Oh no, I tie her up to the stump of a tree.”

No rules can be laid down for the sailor’s Sabbath. It must depend on the storm or the calm, and on things which no one can control. So the mother of a family of little children, with all the disorders of childhood to pass through, cannot always go by rules. Nor can the sick man, nor even the minister of Christ; it is his hardest day of labor, and he keeps the Sabbath best when, with a right spirit, he works the hardest.

But if we cannot all have specific rules and directions, we can have *hints*; and it is only two of these that I now propose to give.

In order then to the right observance of the Sabbath,

1. *You must have an enlightened conscience.*

The word of God will inform you *when* the Sabbath was instituted, and *why*. It will show you that it is not a Jewish institution, but was

“made for man;” that it is to be as perpetual as the world which it lifts up towards God; that its design is the moral culture of our race, a season for worship, for praise, and prayer, and confession. Our notions respecting it are not to be taken from the age in which we happen to live. Every age has its own driftings and dangers, which are sure to be away from the Bible, let them be what they may. The Bible cannot bend to the age, but we must try to bring the age to the Bible, as the right standard. There can be little doubt that *our* age is drifting towards relaxed views in regard to the Sabbath. It arises from the state of the country, from the influx of multitudes from the old world, where no sacredness is associated with the Sabbath, from the allurements and calls of mammon, from a craving for sensational preaching, so that we have every imaginable and unimaginable thing advertised to be preached at this place and that place every Sabbath, and we have imitators of the follies which men of real mind continually commit, and we have not a small class of preachers to whom a battle, a fire, a great railroad accident, or a huge ship-

wreck, is a real God-send to help out the next sermon. There is a feeling too, with many, that it is very important not to seem to be rigid and Puritanic, and they are very careful not to drive the world off by too tenaciously holding up a holy Sabbath. They tell us of the awful severity and rigidity of our fathers, and how they used to disgust their children by the gloomy solemnity of the Sabbath.

I must say here that, for myself, I was brought up after the “most straitest sect” of Puritans—Saturday night, catechism in the school on Saturday, and catechism on the Sabbath, a small piece of pie for dinner, and every worldly thing interdicted—and yet I know I was never disgusted with the Sabbath. On the contrary, it made an impression of its sacredness on me, for which I thank God, and I can never be thankful enough for this training. It is a very easy thing, and a very contemptible thing, to sneer at our fathers. But it is wholly unjust. I have lately seen in a religious paper the old story of the boy whom his father tied to a bed-post on the Sabbath, all day, and the boy asking if there were any

bed-posts in heaven ; for if so, he didn't want to go there. This is told as if it belonged to a Puritan family in New England. I have only to say, that when a boy I heard it told of some old Scotch Covenanter in Scotland. And I presume it was about as old then as now, and about as true. I don't believe a word of the story. And yet how many are so afraid of the Puritan Sabbath that they read papers and magazines, talk on all manner of things, and lay no restraint on their families. And I sometimes fear there is less conscience on this subject than on almost any other. Is the conscience enlightened and obeyed if you make the Sabbath less than one-seventh of your time ; if you talk about what you would not wish Christ to hear ; if you walk abroad, even if you go to the beautiful cemetery ; if you read what you would not like to have your minister see you reading ; if you make it a day of special sleeping, so that you can chase the world harder the ensuing week ; if you take special pains with your table, so as to disqualify you for thought and meditation ; if you have no special season

for private worship and communion with God ; if you are aware that the day comes and goes, and you make no spiritual improvement, or if it is a weariness rather than a delight ?

2. *Feel that the Sabbath is all-important, and to be honored and preserved sacred.*

The day that we cease to regard the Sabbath as holy, and the fourth command as binding as any one of the ten, will be calamitous to us, to our children, and to our country. I do beg my dear brethren in the ministry not to be afraid to hold up this sacred day, and to urge it upon the consciences of their people ; and I do solemnly entreat our Christian families not to fall in with the notion that "we live in a new day" and "an enlightened age," and "a busy, stirring age," and therefore we must relax our notions in regard to keeping the Sabbath. Our children will turn their backs on God when they do on his Sabbath. France once became so "enlightened" that she trampled the Sabbath out of existence, and she became at once a cauldron of blood, around which demons danced as they stirred the fires. Mammon will urge Christians to fall in with

the necessities of the age, and run cars and steamboats, and make visits, and in hundreds of ways destroy the Sabbath. Nothing can now save it as a holy, sacred day, but the conscience of Christians. If they fail, it is gone, and I have no hope for our churches or our civil institutions. It must be held, not as a day of rest and teaching merely, but a day holy unto God. The day, in name, will live. I have no fear that it will ever cease to be regarded, and that stately; but to answer the ends of its appointment, it must be sacred and holy time. I could tell some facts about it that would make the heart of piety ache. We have no fear that infidelity can tear it from the Bible, and make the world believe that it has not God's seal upon it; but we are more afraid that, without designing it, or hardly knowing that they are doing it, the people of God will allow our headlong age to cause it to drift from its moorings, and be made to rise and fall as it floats on the waves of popular opinion. Instead of being a time to let down that which is high and good, the present is a solemn moment in the world's history; and to the

Sabbath, the very sheet-anchor of this fallen world, we should cling with all the tenacity of martyrs. Do n't be afraid then of being too particular or too rigid in keeping the Sabbath. The danger is all the other way; and I am more than glad, I am thankful, that I may believe that I am speaking the mind and the feelings of the great body of evangelical ministers in uttering my earnest cry for the Sabbath of our fathers.

## XIV.

## HOW TO MAKE OUR PRAYER-MEETING DULL.

THE weekly prayer-meeting is an old institution. Almost every church has it. I might give its origin, its uses, its benefits to the church and the community. There are a great many who never attend it. I shall not say a word to them at this time. But many who do attend, seem to contrive to make it dull. As this is a labor-saving age, it occurs to me that a few hints might help them to do it easily, readily, and surely. Please remember that the problem is, *how to make our prayer-meeting dull*, and that I am telling you how to do it.

Suppose the meeting is to be to-night. During the day, don't think of it, don't speak of it, don't let one in your family dream that you think of it. It is a small affair, and your thoughts are on business and bargains or dress, or some great affair. When night comes, see if you can't find some excuse for staying away.

Are you not *very* tired? You have been at hard work, and began early. You *must* feel tired. Wont that excuse you? If not, are you sure you don't feel unwell? Have you no cold coming on? If not, is it not difficult to leave the family? Is there no duty at home that will excuse you?

Inquire if it is really your duty to go. Everybody cannot go. Why should it be your duty? There are your neighbors A and N, who never go. There are multitudes who never go; why must you be a martyr to duty, and be always expected there? You have seen the horse which dreads to trot. You touch him with the whip, and cry, "Come, sir," and he hitches and rolls, and seems to say, "Now *must* I trot again?" You can sympathize with him, can't you? You know too, that the meeting will be thin and dull, and you will not feel warm and happy; and now, is it really your duty to go? Dwell on this doubt as long as you can, and then if, after all, you feel that you *must* go,

Go in very late. It shows that you determined to be there, at all events. Take

your seat down near the door. You wont be so likely to be called on to "take a part." Don't Christ tell you to take a low place, and what is that but near the door, behind all the rest? The leader of the meeting wont be so likely to see you there, and what example is more beautiful than modesty!

Don't feel any responsibility about the meeting. Don't go to your closet and pray for the presence of Christ before you go. Don't lift up your heart for the presence of the Holy Spirit, while on the way. If you are a singer, be sure and let your modesty have full play, and don't sing. If you are not a singer, don't feel any responsibility to get a singer or two there; that patient, faithful sister will be there, and she will turn her anxious face at every opening of the door, to see if some brother who can lead the singing is not coming in, and finding none, she will set the tune and go on, as she has hundreds of times before. Why should *you* feel responsibility, when she is evidently growing in patience and meekness under a burden so wrongfully thrown upon you?

If called upon to pray, see how long you can be. The world is full of things that need prayer, the Jews, the Gentiles, the Mohammedans, Papists, Heathen, and the like. Bring them all in. It shows how you can comprehend all. Then there's "the patience of hope" fully exercised before you get through. If you have any particular hobby, be sure and ride that. Give the Lord the whole history of it. Tell him plainly what you think he ought to do in the case, and exhort him to do it. Such a long prayer is the main dish of the meal. There's little room for much more, and you know too much variety is not good. It makes "itching ears."

Perhaps it is a better way to put your head down, and look so tired and indifferent that they will not dare to call upon you, lest they find you asleep. Sit silent as long as you can. There's great power in silence. It helped Wolff to take Quebec. And if you sit with the head down, how do they know but you are in profound meditation? There may be more passing in your mind than they ever dream of. Who can tell what notes a

silent harp might give forth, if it had David's hand to wake it up?

If they *will* call upon you, and insist on it, that you "say a few words to us," then by all means occupy the time in telling how dead the church is, how low religion is, how sin abounds, and be sure and give those who are not present a sound berating for their absence. It shows that you know a few things, and you know that religion will never revive so long as the prayer-meeting is so poorly attended. No matter if you have been harping upon this for years. Are we not to give "line upon line?" You need n't exactly *scold*, but come as near it as you can. Put on the lash, they will bear it, for—they are absent. And how comforting and encouraging to the faithful few who do attend, to have you always complaining, and gathering all the thorns and burrs that grow on mount Zion. The reproofs of the righteous are like oil; pour it on, and see if it does not make their faces shine with joy.

See how uniform you can make all your meetings. No variety in singing, in tunes, in

those that take part in it. Never relate any thing you have read or heard. And when you go home, try and laugh about the meeting, how dull it was; what miserable singing; how Mr. Black went over the same prayer, and Mr. White made the same exhortation, and Mr. Hand was dull, and Mr. Foot was slow, and you *do* wonder what ails the meetings! Be sure and let your family hear you find fault with every thing that was "said or sung," with men because they did take a part, and with men because they did not. Speak of your meetings in such a way that saint and sinner will be afraid to go near them.

I might extend these directions much further. But "enough is as good as a feast;" and I feel certain that if these hints are faithfully followed, you will have no cause to complain because your prayer-meeting is not dull enough; and if you are not grateful to me for the aid I have given, may it not be because you fear it will be found out where you got your power—to make the prayer-meeting dull!

## XV.

HOW TO MAKE OUR PRAYER-MEETING  
INTERESTING.

WE sympathize deeply with the true and the faithful—not a large number in any church—who are always at “our” prayer-meeting, and who *wish* they knew how to make it more interesting. You want to know how to bring live coals to the altar as you go to waken its fires. You want not merely to enjoy more, but to have others enjoy more; and you want this meeting to be an instrument of doing your church and the community good. How shall you aid?

Let the weekly prayer-meeting live in your heart. Think of it when in your business; when you read your Bible, and see if you do not light upon a beautiful text to carry there; when you read the religious paper, and see if you do not find some thought or some anecdote or some fact which you can use in the meeting. See if you can’t gather a few drops

of the dew which falls on Hermon. You may not be a theologian or a genius, but you can do something, if you will think of it beforehand. You can utter a thought in a few moments, which cost you perhaps days to think out. A single thought that has been revolving in your mind, may be valuable in proportion as it has been thought over. The pebble which David chose was one that had been washed and smoothed in the brook a long time. It was all the better for its polishing.

On the day of your meeting, do n't forget to think about it; mention it in your family worship; let your family see that it lives in your heart. Be sure and pray for it before you go to it. Ask, plead that Christ will be manifested in it. Pray that the Holy Spirit may be present to warm, cheer, and animate every heart.

Feel responsibility for it. Make it a solemn duty, a habit, and a privilege to be there. Go with a cheerful face. Do n't go acting, looking, or feeling as if you had a chain around you called Duty, by which you were dragged to the place. If the room is dark, move round

and get more lights. If not warm and cheerful, go to your brethren, and insist upon it that the room *must* be comfortable, pleasant, and inviting. If others seem inclined to shirk, don't you. If the singing is tame or dull, or there is none at all, be careful and see some one of the brethren who is a singer, and urge him to be there. If you can't sing, he *must* go. If you can, you need his aid. Go up near the pulpit or table, up where your minister and your brethren can see you, and feel that your breath is warm.

If the meeting is thrown open for remarks, don't sit and wait for others. Be ready. Have your gun loaded, and shoot quick. There is no life in silence or in waiting. Let your prayer be *short*. It may be much longer than you think it is. I once heard and joyfully united in six prayers, no one of which was over two minutes long. They were intensely good.

Feel under obligation to have variety in your meeting. It is fatal to make a prayer-meeting stereotyped. Can't you sometimes have something new sung? Can't you get

this or that diffident young man to come in and say a few words? Can't you get that other man who never speaks, to open his mouth? You must go to them alone before the meeting, and speak encouragingly to them. Don't scare them by making them think they must make a speech. Go to your meeting hopeful—I mean, really believing Christ, when he promises to be in the midst of the two or three who gather in his name. You may feel, perhaps, that you are cold and others are cold. But there certainly will be *One* there, Christ, who is not cold. Don't always be harping on one string, either in your prayers or in your exhortations. Keep the wheels out of the old, deep rut. Some are always dwelling upon a revival, a revival, as if there was nothing done or to be prayed for but this: whereas there is the spirituality of the church; there is the word, the seed sown; there is the Sabbath-school; there is the liberality of the people of God; there is the soil preparing and to be prepared for the seed of the word; and all these belong to the prayer-meeting.

Don't scold. It will do no good. Those present feel that they don't deserve it, and the absent don't hear it. The prayer-meeting is not the place to groan under spiritual dyspepsia. Don't whip your pastor with your prayers. His heart is heavy enough; but he knows it is often best to keep his heart-aches to himself, and to be at least outwardly cheerful. He wants and needs your earnest prayers and sympathies.

Don't teach false theology. You sometimes hear men say, "If now this church would only come down on her knees in the dust before God, a revival would follow." Don't you know that if she should thus come down, the revival *is already there*?

Don't carry a burdened conscience to the prayer-meeting. If to-day or the last week you have wronged any one in bargains, in words, or in any way, settle it with him and with God before you come to the meeting. You will find the meeting dead and cold to you if you do not. Our sins separate between us and God.

Don't be afraid you will do more than

your share to make "our prayer-meeting" interesting. "Whatsoever *thy* hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." In building a church edifice—the mere shell to contain the church—there must be the architect and the contractor and the carpenters, and also the men with spades, and men to carry the brick and the mortar. They are all to do something. So let it be with all who are laboring together to build up the true spiritual church of Christ.

## XVI.

## FAMILY GOVERNMENT.

I AM speaking of those whose children are young; with characters unformed, with faculties undeveloped. Don't turn away, saying to yourself, "I can't get time to read or plan. He can't sympathize with me. I have burdens heavy enough daily, without being lectured." Softly, softly. It may be possible that, if I can't relieve you of any of your burdens, I can help you to bear them. Those little ones, the flowers of the hearth, the sunbeams in your dwelling, are worth to you and to themselves all your anxieties, cares, and toils, and they will, if rightly trained, repay a thousand-fold all they cost you. Remember that you are to your child a friend, a ruler, and a teacher.

To control him, readily and fully, *you must at all times govern yourself.*

If the child sees that you are irritable, hasty, ill-tempered, and passionate, he will

understand this very early. I shall not now explain the reason why it is so; but the fact is undeniable, that he who would control others, must control himself. If then, you act and decide, say Yes or No, smile or frown, according as you happen to feel at the moment, you make that child feel you are as liable to treat him with injustice as otherwise. He can't respect passion or temper. You lose in his respect, and also in his love. And your observation will teach you that, among all your acquaintances, you can't think of one instance where parents have good family government, who cannot govern themselves.

*Insist on prompt, cheerful obedience, and that without giving the reasons.*

It is a very common mistake to appeal to the reason of your child, and show him how reasonable your command is. The fact is, the child has no reason to which you can appeal. His reason must grow out of the experience of life. It is undeveloped as yet, and God has placed him in subjection to you, because you have reason and he has not. The child loves to discuss the matter, and debate the

why and wherefore, and if permitted, will often overpower the reason of parents by the most puerile assertions. You may cultivate the reasoning faculties of your child as much as you please, but it is not the time to do it when you have laid a command upon him. Some try to gain obedience by appealing to love, or shame, or the good opinion of others, but never seem to think that their commands are all the reason the child needs. God lays his commands upon us, without assigning the reasons why we should obey them. What a volume on the rights of property might be written under the command, "Thou shalt not steal."

In family government it is very important that *the father and mother sustain each other.*

The child will early learn which parent yields soonest to importunity, and he will therefore, if refused by the sterner one, never rest till he has tried the weaker. I shall not say which of the parents is oftener the soonest to yield. But when the child makes a request which you see fit to deny him, and he says, "Well, I'll go and ask father; I know

he will let me," that father, if he does so, is making a great mistake. The mother, shut up, worn and troubled, wearied and discouraged by the constant supervision of her children, needs all the aid and support which the authority of a father can give her. The child should never feel that there is an appeal from the decision of one parent to the good-nature of the other. Even if you don't feel that the decision has been the wisest possible, don't let the child know that you feel so. Take it for granted that the decision has been right. Draw together, and let the voice of one be the voice of both.

*Strive to develope your child slowly.*

It is an inherent part of the American character to do things quick. We can't wait for trees to grow naturally. We must stimulate them, and then boast how early we made them bear fruit, forgetting that they must decay as early. We can't *build* a house, we must "run it up." We can't build a bridge that will last ages; we must "throw one over the stream," and in a few years see it perish. We don't want to have boys and girls; they

must leap from infancy into manhood. We must stimulate the child, see how fast we can cram and excite the brain, and develope the man in him. Hence we must have premature and immature and obscure men—all from the most promising and precocious children. Whereas *the perfection of education is slow development.*

When you see the fond parent trying to show you how “forward” his child is, how “quick” he is, how he excels in his class, and when you see him trying to “show off” his darling, I beg you to commiserate the child, and write it down in your book that the child will never be much of a man. That slow, heavy boy, whose skull seems to be so thick that you cannot get an idea into it, will probably develope slowly and long, and will retain every idea that ever gets into his skull. He is the boy that you may expect to make a strong, manly character. Willows sprout early and grow fast. The oak puts out its leaf late, and grows slowly. The one is woven into baskets, the other is bolted into ships. Don’t feel elated because your child is pre-

cocious; do n't feel discouraged because he seems slow to acquire. In the end, the turtle almost invariably beats the fox in the race. We could give examples enough to prove this.

You will find that a great deal of character is imparted and received at the table. Parents too often forget this; and therefore, instead of swallowing your food in sullen silence, instead of brooding over your business, instead of severely talking about others, let the conversation at the table be genial, kind, social, and cheering. Don't bring disagreeable things to the table in your conversation, any more than you would in your dishes. For this reason too, the more *good* company you have at your table, the better for your children. Every conversation with company at your table is an educator of the family. Hence the intelligence and the refinement and the appropriate behavior of a family which is given to hospitality. Never feel that intelligent visitors can be any thing but a blessing to you and yours. How few have fully gotten hold of the fact, that company and conversation at the table are no small part of education!

One thing more. There is one thing that will aid you to govern yourself, to decide rightly, to be kind and yet firm, to govern your children, and to meet the responsibilities of life, beyond all that I have said, and that is, daily, humble, earnest *prayer*. This is the mightiest aid you can seize. Without it, you will fail; but with it, you can hardly be disappointed in your hopes.

## XVII.

*THE MODEL DEACON.*

WHEN I first knew him he was a young man, having just come to the place of my residence to begin business among us. He was unmarried, and I knew him only as a very pleasant young man, bearing a mild countenance and a hopeful look. He at once came into my church, entered the Sabbath-school as a teacher, and showed an active, modest piety. From that hour to his death he has been steadily and silently growing in Christian character. In a very few years he had so gained the confidence of the community, that, while yet a young man, he was elected an officer in our church. With great diffidence and distrust, he at once came to talk the matter over with his minister, and receive his advice. He came in company with another young man, whom the church had placed by his side in precisely the same circumstances. I should not dare attempt to recall the solemn

conversations of that hour. The modest, beautiful letter which they addressed to the church, accepting the trust, showed that she had not mistaken her sons. They were together inducted into office on the Sabbath that our old church edifice was burned.

Nobody has so good an opportunity to know the members of his church as the pastor; and if he be a kind, generous-hearted man, no one can appreciate all that is good so highly. To him every improvement of character among them is the dust of diamonds.

Some men in office are always in a state of anxiety lest they be overlooked, or have less respect or influence than is their due. But so far as I can remember, I never saw any of this Diotrephean spirit in him. When called to act, whether it were to do a humble deed or a great one, he never inquired how he would look while doing it; he never seemed to think of himself. Hence he was always natural, and always like himself. He never shouted in order to hear the echoes of his own voice. I have seen him on great occasions, when many eyes were upon him, and I have

seen him at the head of our Sabbath-school year after year, and I have seen him bringing in benches and giving seats to the poor, and falling back into the ranks and taking a single class in the same Sabbath-school, and I never saw any difference in his appearance or spirit.

Whether conducting a religious meeting, when its responsibility was resting on him, or whether talking alone with his pastor concerning his private experience and Christian hopes, he was ever the same quiet, lowly, yet sincere man. You never feared that he would say or profess more than he felt; that he would attempt to be more than he was, or try to do more than he could. He did not wait for *great* occasions when he could do great things for his Master, or for a dark night, when his lamp, if kindled, would be seen afar off, but was always ready to act. I have had him with me on councils of importance, and I have had him go with me to the sinning and the erring, and I never, on either of such occasions, heard him say a word or give a look that I would have had altered.

His Christian experience was so wrought

in him, that I don't think he ever had, till he came to die, all the consolations of hope which he might have appropriated. He dwelt higher up the mount than he thought, and he wist not that his face shone, when others saw that it did.

There was no one among us, perhaps, who was more interested in foreign missions; in collecting money from our own people; in receiving it from the churches in the country to be transmitted to the Board; in attending the monthly concerts; in circulating intelligence; or more warm in sympathy or more fervent in prayer for the conversion of the world; and yet there was no one, probably, whom the poor would more deeply mourn or more decidedly miss. His was an eye that saw want afar off, and no less clearly that which was near.

He was a model in benevolence. I have never known him turn away from a call of charity; and my only fear on that score has been lest he should actually give more than he ought, and to objects not always the most pressing. And when I speak of his amiable life, I do not mean simply that he had a coun-

tenance so mild and lovely that all loved to look at it; speech so sweet that all loved to have him speak to them; a smile so winning that all loved to meet it; and a disposition so gentle that none could receive offence: but I mean that the natural traits of character were so permeated by the spirit of Christ, that the whole man was made uncommon. How seldom is it that a pastor can be associated intimately with one standing in his relation, and so long, and be able to recall no word that was unkind, no act that was disrespectful, no emotion that was un-Christian, and no look that was cold. And yet there was no want of manly independence, and no spirit of sycophancy.

We sometimes admire the tree which our own hand hath planted, as it silently and slowly shoots up and spreads out its branches, and stands out a thing of strength and of beauty. How much more beautiful to see a human soul developed and enlarged and strengthened, till the whole community can trust it and love it while here, and deeply mourn it when removed.

His was the beautiful path on the banks of the river of life, and under the shade of the trees that grow there, in which he who walks therein has neither to seek nor to shun office, neither to seek nor to shun riches, neither to strive to be great or small, because there walks One with him who is himself the exceeding great reward. I never heard him intimate that there was an office in the world which he coveted, or gains that he desired. He took his place modestly at life's banquet, and asked nothing which was not in the bill of fare. Whether I wanted him to go with me to an outside neighborhood meeting, or to see to the wants of any poor saint, or converse with any backsliding one, or do any other self-denying work, I never knew him refuse, or try to find excuses for not doing it. And yet so unobtrusive was his piety, so symmetrical was his character, and so gently he moved among us, that it was not till we saw him actually taken from us that we realized how much of worth was removed. Those who have seen his face as he ministered at the communion table, those who have met him weekly at the

prayer-meeting, those who have seen him in his busiest hours, those who have been in his classes in the Sabbath-school, those who have had him come to them in their poverty or sickness, will now, and more and more, feel their loss and miss his presence.

I am comforted under our heavy loss, in the cheering thought that such a character may actually grow up among us, and reach so much development, and when, in the fulness of usefulness and of strength it is cut down, it can leave such a mighty testimony to the power of the gospel of Christ. Scarcely could any one have lowlier views of the depravity of the heart, feel a deeper need of an atonement and a divine power to renew the heart, or have a more exalted reverence or love for the Saviour of sinners.

The summons came unexpectedly. And when the overtired brain gave way and the intellect was shattered, it was beautiful to see the weary spirit dwelling on the great realities of eternity, struggling to see light through the chinks which disease was making in the poor house of clay, and ringing out of the

midnight of the soul, “God is love! God is love!”

I have buried many strong, useful men. I have had Aarons and Hurs taken from me; but I have seldom more deeply felt my personal loss than in burying this man. But on the Sabbath morning, just after we had commenced our morning service, the angel of the Presence came, and took him away so gently, that his footsteps were not heard, and the redeemed spirit went up to the everlasting Sabbath of heaven. So lived and so died the model deacon, HENRY G. DAVIS.

## XVIII.

## "WE HIRE BY THE YEAR."

"We hire by the year, sir," said one of whom I had made the inquiry when his church was to have a pastor settled. "We hire by the year, and we like it. We are not tied, and our preacher can go when he pleases, and we can get another when we find one who suits us better."

This was the truth in a nutshell, and it put me to thinking, and then to looking round me. The first thing I saw was, that at least ten churches in one county are at this moment "hiring" preachers, instead of having settled pastors. The next thing I saw was, to my amazement, that my own pastorate had outlived every other one in the county, and that, on an average, our churches have had over four and a half men to each church during this time. And now may I plainly say to our churches, that my impressions are, and observation confirms the impressions, that this sys-

tem of "hiring preaching" will, in the results, be very pernicious to our churches, and not less so to the ministers.

*The system degrades the ministry.*

"We hire our preachers by the year," and so I hire my man. At the end of the year he may leave, and has left several times before the year was out, *hoping* to get higher wages. So may your preacher do. He is merely a "hireling," in the same sense that the man hires out his two hands. When the Jewish priest was "ordained of men," it was during all the years of his service; and when Titus was directed to "ordain elders in every city," nobody thinks it was to create a circulating ministry, to be hired from time to time. Is it right, is it comely, is it honoring those who are "set over" our churches, to place the office on a level with the hired help of the farmer, the tanner, and the street-cleaner? Many of these men who thus preach, have far less wages than mechanics whom I know, who are hired in the same way. Is it not degrading the office of the Christian ministry in the eyes of your children and of the com-

munity? The ministers feel it if the churches don't.

*This system prevents the power of sympathy, a great power in the pastoral office.*

One of the things that gives the pastor power, is the strong attachment between him and his people. He loves them, and they and their children love him, confide in him, commit their secrets to him, and ask his advice on points the most important, and yet confidential. He is the friend, the adviser, the sympathizer of all. They feel that his destiny and happiness are bound up with theirs. Next to the bosom of Christ, they lean on him, and next to Christ they tell him all their trials and sorrows. In a few years the young look to him with the reverence of children. Now, suppose he is "hired" for a year, and that is the *longest* period I have ever heard of as to the bargain, how cautious will he be not to love his people too well, and how cautious will they be not to become too strongly attached to him. They know that permanency is impossible, and they will not become attached to him.

*This system tends to make both parties uneasy.*

All who know human nature and who have observed closely, know that the great temptation of a man in Congress is, to keep looking over his shoulder to see how this or that vote will strike his constituents. His speeches, his voting, his whole course is shaped with reference to being continued in office or dropped. Now place a preacher in the position of being "hired" by the year, and if he is not continually looking over his shoulder to see if he cannot discover a better place, and if the people are not continually contriving how they can get a more popular and people-drawing man, then human nature works on new principles. The ship is not moored, only riding at easy anchor, and if she sees a prize, how easy to slip the cable and be off. The pastoral office, like that of marriage, is appointed by God, and in sacredness comes next to the marriage relation. Let husbands and wives act on this principle, and society will be in ruins within a single generation. If you say the system will make the preacher more care-

ful, more anxious to please, lest he be turned off at the end of the year, I reply, We don't want him to have that temptation. We don't want him to be tempted to be a sycophant, any more than a wandering star. Our churches have no right to place either temptation before their ministers.

*This system will inevitably make a weak ministry.*

Let a man in any profession, in any business, be *always beginning*, and he will never accomplish much. A young preacher goes to a place, and he knows from the very atmosphere and the terms of the bargain, that his stay there will be short. Probably he is in debt for his education. He has no capital in money, in character, in influence: he has these to make. Now he is morally certain that he can only barely make a beginning here. He can't make book-cases, buy books, create a library, gather materials, fix his home, for he is only "hired." What can he do with his books, if he tries to draw from the reservoir of thought which is created and ready for him? He cannot arrange them in his book-

cases made with his own hands, as I and many others have done all our professional life, nor think with comfort about removing the heavy things when he removes. He is only a "hired" sojourner, and is soon to take up his bed and walk. He has hardly made a beginning for himself or his people, before he must go somewhere else, and begin again. And thus the poor man is all his life beginning, and wondering why he has not grown more and become more. If our churches want to dwarf the ministry, and keep us as a kind of sacred apprentices, this is the way to do it, and this will surely be the result. No man can be expected to study and think, if he is to go to a new place shortly, and go over the same ground again.

*This system wrongfully withholds from the ministry a great moral power.*

There is no influence like that of "character," and to have that you must give time for its growth. Every man knows that there is an indescribable power in the pastor, which no other man can have. Hear him pray for his flock, meet him in the prayer-meeting,

meet him in the ecclesiastical council, and you will feel it. His people know that the man who has sustained himself for many years as their teacher, must and does know them through and through, that he must and does desire their highest interests ; and he has great moral power. No other man in the town begins to have this. It is the power of character. You may plant the best tree in the nursery, but if you remove it once a year, or once in two years, every removal checks its growth, or puts it back and dwarfs it, because it is not in accordance with the laws of nature ; and it is equally in violation of all moral laws, that a circulating ministry shall have the moral power of the pastor. God's ministers are too poor and too dependent on their people, and too much in their hands, to have any source of influence shut off. You wrench from us a mighty power for good, when you take from us the crook of the shepherd. The sheep hear no other voice as they hear his.

*This system tempts the preacher to flee in a time of trouble.*

It is letting out no family secret, when I

say that there are times when winds rise and storms come in almost every parish, before which none but a pastor can stand. The tree needs all the roots which it has been fastening in the soil for years, in order to stand. I could speak of many, many cases, where nothing would have availed to hold the ship, but the strong cable that took years to make. I could mention an old minister whose pastorate was very long, who once found himself shut out of his church for six weeks. For six weeks he went every Sabbath morning to his closed church; his people shut his mouth every Sabbath, and the grace of God enabled him to shut it the rest of the week. The wind went over, the calm followed, and he went on in his labors as if nothing had happened—to the great delight and admiration and benefit of his people. They were always grateful to him for it. How few of these hired preachers could have stood thus. It is a grievous wrong to place us in a position from which we are tempted to flee when a storm rises, or "the people are moved" to flee because we see "a wolf coming." You may call us "stated sup-

plies," but we can't *supply* the place of the pastor. You may call us "acting pastors," but it is "*acting*" and not *being* the pastor. We can lay no plans to train up the rising generation, and make our church a theological school, for we cannot expect to be there long, and our successor can hardly be expected to take up the thread where we dropped it. I feel that our churches are doing themselves harm beyond all that I can describe, in thus degrading and paralyzing the ministry.

One word to my brethren in the ministry. My dear brethren, there is no need of this state of things. Ministers are scarce, and are growing scarcer. You need not, and ought not to be placed in this position. You can, and ought to be settled as regular and permanent pastors.

"But can't something be said on the other side?" Undoubtedly. I could say many things, but I feel sure it would be wrong to say them, because it would be doing that which would encourage a practice that already threatens to weaken the "stakes," and shorten the "cords" of 'le tents of Zion.

## XIX.

## PREACHING TO CHILDREN.

IF I have any good judgment on the subject, it has led me to attempt to preach to children as seldom as possible. It is, in my estimation, the most difficult of all pulpit preparations and performances. I have heard of men who attempted to preach to children every Sabbath the year round. I may be mistaken, but I don't believe the man is living who can long sustain himself in this attempt. I would, at all hazards, rather undertake to preach to the same number of doctors of divinity, and that is saying the thing very strongly. In order to address children successfully, the speaker must be at the right age, in the right position, and in the right circumstances. My own early volume of "Lectures to Children" was preached extempore first, in a revival in, which the children were especially interested, and each one written out immediately after I had returned from the meeting. That is what

I mean by "right position and right circumstances." Children don't reason logically, or judge of a speaker as we do, but their moral instincts are as quick as a flash, and a speaker can tell by the time he has uttered two sentences, whether he can command their attention. There is a sort of mesmerism about the thing, and if you can't put your sympathies into communication with theirs, it is all over. You may beat the bush as hard as you please, but you will raise no bird. You may shout, but there will be no echo.

Now to answer two questions.

1. *How to gain the attention of children.*

Probably no rules or teaching would enable some men to do it.

Use simple words. They should not be babyish, namby-pamby, but plain, short, and terse Anglo-Saxon. Say "God," and not the "Divinity;" "the Bible," and not "the inspired book;" "sin," and not "the transgression of the Divine law," and the like. If you happen to use a great word don't undertake to explain and define it, telling them the "summary of religion" is "equivalent to

and synonymous with, synopsis of revelation."

Let your sentences be short and simple, not involved, not strung along with several thoughts. You may condense to almost any extent all that you have to say, but you may not spin out.

Begin without preface, or explanation, or apology. Strike right into what you have. If you have any meal in your sack, don't be a long while in untying the strings, or saying you wish the quality was better, or that somebody's sack besides yours had been opened first. Be self-possessed, and very slow and deliberate. Some speakers know they can command the attention of the children but a short time, and that they have much to say, and so they speak as *fast* as possible, and hope they have communicated much. They might as well take a great pitcher of water and pour a great stream into the mouth of a very small-necked bottle, hoping that the bottle fills up in proportion to the size of the stream. Nine-tenths, at least, runs over, and very little gets into the bottle. They should

have poured very slowly, and made the stream very small. It is any thing but wise to try to see how much you can say and communicate, or how many anecdotes you can tell, in a given time. The question is not how much food can be crowded down, but how much can be digested.

Be short. No address, unless the circumstances are very peculiar, should be over fifteen, or at most twenty minutes in length. Children can't give their attention, undivided, longer than that. All beyond is "battering down on their heads," as Rowland Hill says of a third sermon on the Sabbath. Some keep on talking, in the vain hope that they can soon say a smart thing and then stop. Such fish are hard to catch. Waiting for such results is like trying to beat into a harbor when the wind is ahead. You get near enough to hear the bells ring, but it seems as if you would never get in. Most tedious speeches are really far more intolerable by the strong effort made to stop at a very smart place.

2. *What are the best aids in preparing one's self for this service?*

No satisfactory or definite answer can be given to this question. You want certain natural endowments, such as a good sound judgment, a correct taste, a nice sensibility, a susceptibility to what is beautiful, appropriate, and especially what will illustrate and make simple. You want to know what thought you wish to communicate and illustrate. The illustration should be for the thought, and not the speech for the illustration. We don't give pills for the sake of the sugar with which they are coated. We don't build a ship for the sake of the bunting she wears. The children know as quick as you do whether the speech is made for the illustration and anecdotes, or whether they are for the speech. You may draw from any and every source in nature. I have sometimes found a leaf that dropped at my feet, or the darting of a swallow around me while on the way to the meeting, all the illustration I wanted, or had time to use. The fresher the thought and illustration in your own mind the better. You want to be a *full* man; not in the sense of having your head filled with anecdotes and stories,

but in the sense of having power to draw illustrations from every thing. The preaching of Christ was inimitably beautiful in this respect. You need a good memory, to retain and recall your knowledge. In giving facts and anecdotes, don't amplify and dress them out. They are more effective to be simple and as accurate as possible. As to reading, books, etc., you cannot read for the purpose of gathering materials. That would be like a dyspeptic drawing his strength from the last meal he ate, and if that happened to be turnips, his strength would have the weakness of turnips. You must save as you read, and not read to gather. Perhaps the greatest treasure you could have to draw from, next to the Bible, would be a full file of some good religious paper, extending through many years, and the longer the better. This will be a pond almost inexhaustible. Each volume should be bound or sewed by itself, with a good index at the end. Few have any conception of the amount of valuable thought which lies buried in such a file of old papers. Sometimes you have a thought which you

wish to impress, and you have no illustration, and you go off and find one—just as a man who is building, and wants a particular stick of timber, drops all and goes off to the forest, and cuts down his tree, notches and scores it, and brings it home and fits it in. It may do well, but he has lost much time, and all the workmen have stood still while he was doing it.

Lastly, you must *love* children, and they must feel that you do, and that you are trying to do them good, and have not a single thought about yourself while speaking. You need to be warm, earnest, sincere, kind, and affectionate; not coming down, but speaking as you do because you are down when you begin. Wear the smile of love on your face, because love has first filled your heart.

## XX.

## PALINGENESIA.

IN some of our papers there is a monthly list of patents taken out at Washington. If one has not been in the habit of reading this list, he is surprised at their number. And if he does read them, he is surprised to see how few ever come into use, and become a blessing to the world. Perhaps not one in a hundred ever comes into practical use. And let any one visit the Patent office, and see the models of stoves, machines of every shape and form, of wheels and their cogs, guns, and of every conceivable and inconceivable thing, even to the rat and mouse trap, and he wonders why some of these stoves can't cook without fuel, these wheels move without power applied, or why there should be a rat or a mouse left in all the land. It is an age of quick thinking, of inventions innumerable, and of patents for every thing. Our horses work in patent harnesses, our oxen in patent yokes,

our bees in patent hives, and our mice die in patent traps. These labor-saving plans and machinery are applied to every thing.

Now is it to be wondered at that we want to carry machinery, or at least, human inventions into religion, and use a sort of spiritual chloroform, by which we can walk in paths easier than the old ones? The word at the head of these remarks may seem hard to the reader, but it can't be harder than the thing that it means, namely, *the new birth*, seems to many. If there is one thing which Christ has laid down in language too plain to be misunderstood, too clearly to be denied, too solemnly to be neglected, it is the necessity of the *palingenesia*, or "new birth," in order to be saved. The same truth is recognized again and again by the apostles. Now how is the matter arranged so that men may get through this change easily, and be in the kingdom before they know it?

Some make the new birth to mean leaving Judaism and becoming a Christian. As if the Master in Israel needed solemn assurance that no Jew could be saved, and that he

could not be a Jew and a Christian at the same time.

Some make the new birth to mean a resolution to come to Christ. The sinner is exhorted to come at once to Christ—is told how willing and ready he is to receive him, and that he has but to “will it, and he *is* a Christian.” It don’t seem to be necessary for the sinner to feel his sins, to know any thing what the law requires of him, and what is the amount of his guilt, nothing of the enmity of his heart towards God, to see and know what he has done, but only to “resolve to come to Christ.” These disciples never go to school to Moses for a single day. They have no knowledge of Saul’s three days’ darkness, of the sword which pricked the hearts of all the converts on the day of Pentecost, or of such agony as David felt in his bones. They escape all this, and consequently have no heart-aches to feel, no agonies of spirit to drive them to Christ. They are assured that all this is unnecessary. The law is no longer a school-master to lead to Christ. The new birth is only stepping on the spiritual plat-

form, and saying, "Here I am. I am now going to be a Christian."

"Sure such have no feelings like me;  
Nor know themselves wretched and lost."

If there *is* any experience in such cases, it is superficial and light. It does not go into the very soul. I am afraid to see such converts, and have seen quite too many of them. It is a heavy misfortune to any one to believe that this is the new birth. If it be, I have only to say that, *after it*, the man has got to learn his own guilt and vileness, and see his heart as he never saw it before.

Some try to get through the new birth by getting rid of sin, and bringing in holiness little by little, and gradually growing better and doing better. Like an old painter who painted a great and high mountain with a man at the foot swinging his pickaxe, and saying, "*peu a peu*," "little by little;" the difficulty seems to be, the mountain grows up faster than we dig it down. It is too great a work for a human being to do. As years pass, and the man outgrows this and that sin of youth and of early life, he fancies that he chose to

drop it, and is really growing good, though conscious that he has taken up other sins in the place of such as he has left behind. Age often congratulates itself because it has cast out some evil spirits, and taken in others; as when the man ceases to be unchaste, that his heart may be filled with covetousness.

It is a favorite method to sneer at the strictness of your ancestors, to ridicule the catechism which was wrought into the old Puritan character, to sneer at the old doctrines of the cross, and to glory in having a religion so much easier to obtain, the cross so much easier to carry, the new birth so easy to experience. These doughty champions of modern improvement in religion, are so delighted to strike the mother who bore them, that they remind one of the man, who, after a free drink, came bounding out of the house, crying, "There, I have done it; I have whipped grandmother, and she over eighty years old!" The religion of many seems to consist in the hard things they can say, and the hard flings they can have, at the theology of their fathers. They are small beings, kicking dead lions.

There is another way of getting over this new birth easily, and that is, to leave the denomination of your fathers, glow with admiration and zeal, scorn the state of darkness you were in, and feel sure that now you have truly been "born again." Such conversions are often very sudden, and produce a self-complacence and a zeal, and a taking-on of airs, quite astonishing to the beholder. We who are left behind, too stupid or too old-fashioned to pass through this palingenesia, are comforted by being told that we are in a state of schism and darkness, and uncovenanted mercy. Ah, me, how we should stand terror-smitten, if we saw these converts from our faith growing in a knowledge of the Scriptures, manifesting as hearty a desire to be rid of sin as to shake off the darkness which surrounded their father and mother. They take popery in homeopathic doses, but it has the flavor of the distillery in which it was made. But we *do* have some comfort in the darkened state in which we are left; we do know that when one of our ministers drops into the garden, it is usually because the stem is so weak

that the fruit cannot hang on longer; and when our private members are thus converted, it is usually those who do not abound in strength of intellect. There is a screw loose before the machine begins to run wild. Our sorrow is not for our loss, for that is usually far less than is supposed; but to see the children and the grandchildren of godly ancestors run into delusions, and think they are born of the Spirit and are safe.

My own experience, and the observation of life, lead me to say to my reader, that if he has a good, Scriptural hope that he has experienced “the new birth,” then,

He has been, and is sensible, and deeply so, that he is a depraved, ruined, lost sinner; and that, if lost eternally, it would be no more than he deserves.

That he never has done any thing that can recommend him to the mercy of Christ.

That if he is converted from sin, it has been done not by himself, but by the agency of the Holy Spirit.

That he will ever feel that he is dependent on the blood of Christ for salvation.

That his strongest evidence that he is born again is, not that he is good, or is growing good, or is dropping this and that sin, or is growing wise, or is leaving the communion of his fathers, but *that he looks to Christ*, keeps “looking” at him, and looking to him alone for salvation. Sovereign mercy alone.

## XXI.

## THE YOUNG MAN'S LETTER.

I AM not unfrequently honored with letters from young men: some making one inquiry, and some another; some hanging on one horn of one difficulty, and some on another. My replies to them are often, from necessity, very brief. Now and then one seems to demand a more full reply, lest an opportunity of real usefulness should be lost. Such a letter is now lying before me, and it belongs to a class of the same kind. After assuring me that "he is not an infidel," the writer adds, "I know not what is the object of man's existence. The Bible tells us that it is to repent and believe on Jesus Christ; but I cannot make this harmonize with my reason. The question continually arises in my mind, and repels the idea contained in the Scriptures: Would God, a loving Father, endowed with all power, place mortals upon this earth and allow them to be miserable, when by a look

he could make them happy? Will you answer this question for me?" etc.

Now, my young friend, unknown entirely, will you just sit down and let me talk with you a few minutes? Probably you never saw so much of your composition in print before; but don't be too much elated. Your ideas are any thing but original; for you must know,

In the first place, that almost every young man has to go through a short period of doubting and trying to be an infidel. It seems to be almost inseparable from a certain condition in coming into mental puberty, through which all must pass. Yours is nothing but a very common case, and most likely will shortly pass off. You will never be so wise, or have a mind that can so grasp any thing short of infinite again, as now. The young bird probably never feels that he can soar so high as when he first discovers that he has wings.

In the second place, allow me to say that I have never known a man continue sceptical a long time, who had not somewhere a shallow spot in his mental organization. There is

some screw loose ; and if you meet with such men, you will always find them unbalanced in judgment, and showing decided marks of weakness. They are not the men in whose judgment the community confide ; and for this reason, that the revelation of God is such, and the teachings of his word are such, that a balanced mind, like Bacon's or Newton's, can never be sceptical.

In the third place, your not being able to make facts undeniable agree with your reason, is no new thing. The poor Indians to whom Eliot preached had the same trouble, and made the same statements, only in far better language than you have done. I have heard of a great many who attempted to "square the circle," or to "discover perpetual motion," or to "find the philosopher's stone," or to explain the mysteries of God's government by the aid of human reason ; but I have never been so fortunate as to find the man who could do either of these. You have probably been an inhabitant of this world less than twenty years, and I suppose you would not pretend that for the first fifteen years your reason had

very great power; and I have strong suspicions that even now it is not competent to sit in judgment upon plans which must, from the very nature of things, take all time, and no small part of eternity, to execute. "Great is the Lord, and *his* understanding is infinite." Let me tell you a short story.

"Old Jocko" and "Little Imp" were two favorite monkeys that went to sea in the good ship Enterprise, Captain Munger. Now, this captain had the name of being a first-rate seaman, a man of fine powers of mind, upright, and a very good man. Old Jocko was an old companion, and Little Imp was a new comer. They had the liberty of the ship, and were a great amusement to the sailors. One day, just at night, old Jocko found Imp high up on the yard-arm, holding on for very life, pale, hungry, and cold.

"Halloa, Imp; what are you doing up there?" cries Jocko. "You have been there all day; and you look cold and hungry. Why don't you come down?"

"Why, Jocko, I believe I sha'n't come down any more."

“Indeed; what’s the matter now? What flea has got into your ear? Why wont you come down?”

“Because I have lost all confidence in Captain Munger. I’ve been watching him all day, and my *reason* tells me that if he were a good man he would never do as he has done to-day.”

“Well, you six-months-old fellow, what has he done so revolting to your reason?”

“I will tell you: this morning early he stopped the ship and shifted the cargo and threw her almost over, so that many hogsheads of molasses, and many casks of something else, rolled into the sea and were lost.”

“What else, Little Imp?”

“Then after the ship was righted, he sent a man up into the rigging when the wind blew—I could hardly cling to the ropes and hold myself on—and the man was thrown off and fell on the deck almost killed. He lay pale, and they said that the thing called “pulse” stopped entirely. His eyes were closed, and the cold sweat was on his face. And what did this captain then do? Why,

he ran down into the cabin and brought up a tumbler of red, fiery stuff, and actually forced the poor fellow's jaws open and poured it all down his throat. Now, would a good man do so?"

"Are you through?"

"No. There was that great dog, Nero; the dog that all the sailors loved so much—only he *would* chase us monkeys. Poor Nero; the captain had him drawn up by a great rope, and then with a great, roaring gun, shot him dead. How the sailors felt! Many of them cried. Was that goodness?"

"Any thing more?"

"Yes: Tom Hawser was showing a little wound on his arm, and what does our precious captain do but whip out his jack-knife and cut the wound much larger. Oh how it bled! It really frightened me."

"Have you done?"

"Yes; and I should think that was quite enough. I can never have any more confidence in Captain Munger. My *reason* tells that a wise and a good man would never do so."

“ Little Imp, how old are you ?”

“ Why, I’ve seen six moons, and am almost as high as your shoulders.”

“ Well, now let *me* talk a little. You must know, then, Oh wise one, that the ship had sprung a leak, and we were all in danger of sinking ; and to get at the leak and stop it and save the cargo and the lives, Captain Munger had to careen the ship on her side and lose a few hogsheads, rather than to lose all the cargo. Was that wrong ? Then the man sent up into the rigging. A sudden squall came on, and the sails must be furled instantly, or the ship swamped ; and all the men had to go aloft. One was blown off ; but the ship escaped. The man *was* almost killed ; and being ‘ ready to perish,’ the captain did pour down raw brandy, which brought back life and pulse, and the man is now in the good captain’s berth, carefully nursed, and will live. Was that a bad deed ?”

“ No ; but his shooting poor Nero ?”

“ Well, Nero has been sick for two days, and you remember he was bitten by a strange dog just before we sailed, and so he was tied

up with that rope; but to-day he has shown such signs of madness, that the captain had to kill him. The sailors cried; but all saw the necessity."

" You 've a strange way, Jocko, of explaining things. What about his cutting poor Tom Hawser's arm so dreadfully? How *can* you account for such cruelty?"

" Very easily. As Tom was pulling Nero up, the dog bit his arm, and the captain knew that unless something was done instantly, Tom must have awful sufferings and die with hydrophobia—the most horrible death; and so he cut out the poison with his knife. Now, Little Imp, you see your 'reason' a'n't big enough to comprehend and judge as to what Captain Munger does, and so you had better leave your cold perch and come down and eat your supper, and not doubt but the captain knows what he is about, even if you do n't."

## XXII.

## THE OLD FOLKS AT HOME.

CAN my reader, with his tenacious memory, tell me the first time he heard “the old folks” spoken of? I wonder what they did for “old folks” in the days before the flood, when a man at one hundred was a mere boy—a ten-year-old boy! When no young lady could get through her education and be introduced into society till she was one hundred and seventy-five at least! When no one could be numbered with “the old folks” under six hundred or six hundred and fifty years! Did “the old folks” appear then as they now do? Did they feel as they now do? How did Methuselah and his wife feel and talk as they sat down together and looked backward and forward? Doubtless very much as “the old folks” now feel and talk.

One of the beautiful arrangements of our heavenly Father is seen in the fact that every period, infancy, childhood, youth, manhood,

and age, has a golden charm attached to it. Each phase is different from the rest, and it is hardly possible to say which is most beautiful. The beauty, the grace, the sunshine, the early morning chatter of young children, always awakens the most delightful emotions. The mischievousness and the restlessness, the magnifying every thing seen and heard, and the sweet credulity of childhood! the opening new worlds of vision, the rising up from the ground of untold air castles, the rainbow hopes leaping from the chambers of the imagination of youth! the sight of the parents in the refined home, watching over and training up their large family of children, each one needing a distinct discipline and training! and then the silver, thoughtful, almost silent and solitary days of the aged pair! which is most beautiful? I cannot decide.

I am now thinking of an aged couple who are called "the old folks," who have lived together, husband and wife, in the same house, over fifty years. They came there young, sanguine, and utterly unable to conceive what they would pass through in fifty years. They

have reared carefully, and properly educated, a large family of children. These have all gone from them now, have families of their own, and are filling each an important place in society, and some of them high posts of influence. They are all members of Christ's church in the order of their parents. And so "the old folks" are left alone—just as they started in life. They have long worn glasses; but at the hour of family worship they take each a Bible and read in course alternately two verses—just as they did when they read with their children. Then they sing the old hymns, though the voices are not so sweet, nor the tones so clear and full as formerly. They live, it is plain from incidental remarks, in the past, the present, and the future. There are certain things that they seldom speak of even to one another. They keep all the playthings which their children once used—ostensibly for their grandchildren when they come to visit them; but the forms that they see playing with them are those of their own dear children, who have gone from them, but who left their image in their memory. The little

books, and even the little shoes, of their bright and early dead, are carefully laid up; and though they never speak of them, each knows that they are precious mementoes of the past.

But to see how careful they are of each other! The fires of passion have all burned out, the beauty and freshness of life have all passed away, and the rich harvests of time have all been garnered. But no lovers could be more tender towards each other. If either is absent, the time is anxiously measured till the return; and the footstep on the threshold may not be elastic as it returns, yet the ear that hears it and the heart that hears it are awake. They seem to understand each other's thoughts without words, and each feels that life would not be life without the other. They think over the past much and often, and realize that they have together toiled, and together struggled and shared all the burdens and sorrows of life. Every memory of the past is equally vivid to each. They don't *say* much about their separation—so certain—to leave one or the other so desolate; but it is plain they think much about it; and from

hints occasionally dropped, it is evident that each is contriving and planning how the other can be made comfortable when thus left alone, each expecting to be the first to die.

And when they think of the future, even carrying their thoughts into heaven, they seem to have an unexpressed fear that heaven will not be all they desire, if they can there be to each other nothing more than old acquaintances. It seems as if they must carry something of the tender feeling which the sorrows and the experience of life have given them, into that world, and as if they must go hand in hand for ever. And the thought that they must soon separate, and that the one must be left to walk alone in the rooms, sit alone at the old table, kneel alone at the altar of God, go alone to the house of the Lord, gives an inexpressible tenderness to their treatment of each other. They never, even in the days of youthful courtship, lived more in each other's thoughts than now. Time hath covered the rough places of life, over which they have walked ; and years have healed the wounds they have suffered, leaving only scars ; but the rough

winds of life have only bowed their heads, and you see not the sturdy oak, but the soft, weeping willow. Memory brings up pictures of the past, some of them recalling sorrows heavy as humanity can bear, but mellows them down in her own golden light; and Hope comes still, not to sing of earth, as she once did, but of heaven, and the ever-opening future. And Faith, showing nothing to the eye, contrives to exert her power over them by mingling her voice in the songs of Hope!

They will not be with each other long; but while they do live, no part of their life has been more full of tender regard, genuine respect, unaffected kindness, or deeper love. The young world can't understand "the old folks;" but for myself, I never go into their dwelling without seeing some of the most purified, refined, and exalted traits of human nature, which to me are inimitably beautiful. And if what I have said shall lead my reader to feel more kindly towards those who are all around us known as "the old folks," I shall have gained my object in writing.

## XXIII.

## PHILARGURIA.

“For the love of money is the root of all evil.” 1 TIM. 6:10.

THE early chemists tried hard to discover two things: first, a method by which they could turn every thing into gold—forgetting that if they could do it, gold would have no more value than pebbles; and second, a universal solvent that would dissolve every thing and any thing—forgetting that if they could do it, they could find no vessel to hold the liquid.

That which comes nearest to a universal solvent, is money, in some shape. It is not necessary that it be in the shape of coin, silver or gold. It may be in the form of diamonds and jewels, or notes equivalent to money and received for money. In the days of the apostles, it was principally in the shape of silver, and therefore “silver-loving,” (*philarguria*,) is called “the root of all evil.” Perhaps it would be more curious than profitable

to attempt to analyze the feeling which we call love of money. It certainly has nothing to do with the beauty of the treasure, for the idol is very often in the shape of well-thumbed notes, or worn bonds and mortgages. There is nothing of the brightness of silver or gold about it. The image of the miser opening and gloating over his chest full of gold, has no reality. If he kept it in his chest, he would see nothing but bags. Bonds and mortgages are far more beautiful to him than real gold. He does not want to gloat over metallic treasures.

*The strongest, deepest passion of the human soul is love of power.* Bear this in mind. The essence of money-loving seems to be, that money gives you the feeling of power, and that constantly. The possessor rides in a crippled old wagon, but he feels that he might ride in a coach if he pleased. He passes by your beautiful dwelling—not caring for it, because he knows he can buy ten like it if he chooses. The coach rolls past him and disturbs him not, for he feels conscious that he might have a score of men in livery about

him, if he chose. Feeling that the tailor would in a moment, at his bidding, prepare the best garments to be had, is better to him than to have the clothes, and so he wears his old garments. Reading the advertisement of the lordly mansion to be sold, and feeling that he could own it in an hour if he pleased, is far better to him than to own it. Feeling that he could own a whole street, gives a sense of power, without the trouble of owning, as really as if he owned it all. He can live in a poor house, wear poor clothing, eat poor food very contentedly, since he knows he has an agent at hand, which can at any day give him the grandest and the best. This conscious power is to him a higher joy than to have these things. It makes him feel that he carries a silent power that is almost superhuman. It seems to cut him loose from dependency, and make him almost divine. And every accumulation, every increase of money, increases this feeling. Hence the man becomes a slave to an idea, a worshipper of a power which he has no thought of ever exercising. He keeps a hungry magician shut away from

human sight, whom he feeds with the life of his own soul, simply because, if he should want the magician to wave his wand, he could make him do it. He keeps the river dammed up, and lets the waters stagnate, while they accumulate, and the pond grows larger, because of the feeling that if he chose, he could let out those waters in a power that would carry any number of mills, or clothe millions in new and warm garments. Hence the love of money is only another form of love of power, and it takes deep hold of the human soul, and touches the same springs that our first mother felt when she desired to be as gods.

*It is power*, this money. If you want pleasure, any appetite gratified, any passion ministered to, money will do it. If you want any comfort within human reach, money will give it. If you want luxuries, thousands of hands will toil, and the skill of your generation is at your command. The ships will bring you splendors, and all climes will respond to your orders. If you want standing among men, money will admit you into the courts of kings, and into the bowers of queens. If you want

influence, you know that if you have money enough, you can make Wall-street tremble as you walk. You feel that you can open or shut, and no man resist. "I can in one month shut up every factory of this article in the land," said a great manufacturer to me. Is not this power and influence? The high-priests of mammon are a mighty power in every civilized land. They command the markets, control the rate of interest, decide what men shall wear, make food plenty or scarce, make business flourish or droop, or cause a panic that shall distress a nation. They move and control the floating property already created, and the credit and industry that are creating more. Every dollar added increases this power. The rich is insolent, and the poor is fawning and servile, not because they are any different, but because one is conscious that he has power, and the other, that he has none. Money would disqualify any man for being a bootblack. I am sorry too, to allow that money is becoming the standard of right and wrong; that it is more and more concentrating in fewer hands, and that one of our greatest dan-

gers now is, that of having in this nation that meanest, most destructive and corrupting of all aristocracies, *a money aristocracy*.

It is very plain then, is it not, why this passion is so strong? It is latent power. It is a great army of reserve. It is unseen efficieney. It is the bolts of Jupiter hid away in a coarse stocking. It is a direct feeder to the ambition of the soul. The same desire of power which makes one man a tyrant or a usurper, or a reckless warrior, makes another a money-lover. Hence too, the passion is universal. It is more than weakness to pretend that any one is free from this love of money. His neighbors would laugh at the pretence, and say that if he gives up in the race, it's because he can't run. Let the most indifferent to money suddenly inherit an estate, and see if the passion is not there. We should deny the organic laws of human nature, to expect any one to be free from it. The beggarly elements of this world are the food, but it is the infinite, though perverted greatness of the human soul, to which they are trying to minister.

You will notice how clear, simple, strong, and almost terrific are the words of my text, “the love of money is the root of all evil”—the parent of all sin—*mater omnium malorum*: Schleusner.

You know something of the cheating that is constantly practised among men, so that you don't expect full measure in wood that you buy, the best quality in the hay or the goods you engage, or to have many things as good as you bargain for. You say that men cheat in horses more than in any thing else. If they do, it is simply because it is easier to do it than in other things. When you buy a garment, or a pair of shoes, you want the testimony of a careful examination with your own eyes superadded to the word of the seller. You feel the need of looking after all that you deal with. Now this “love of money” is the parent of these ten thousand little frauds. Don't you know at least several around you with whom you would rather not trade? This desire for money has to be met by all the laws you can make, by all the courts of justice, and all the prisons of the land. How quickly

would the land be filled with lotteries and gambling rooms and Sunday sports, if law did not come in and interfere between this love of money and these corrupting methods of obtaining it? In all countries where the lawmakers are not in advance of the mass of the people, lotteries and gambling are unlimited, and feed the fires of this passion. Gambling houses are called "hells," because they call out this love of money, and kindle the passion so fast that the man is quickly turned into a demon, and a temporary "hell" is created. You are not surprised to read that government contractors and public servants and bank and railroad directors are "defaulters"—a soft modern term for high-handed villainy; nor that this and that man who had great trusts committed to him has absconded, carrying with him all that he could obtain. You are not surprised to hear that this love of money breaks open banks, wrenches off locks, bursts open safes, rides on the railroad, carries off the treasures of the express, and breaks and burns and tears and murders his way to money; mocking at law, setting at de-

fiance your care and your bolts, daring your prisons, and laughing at punishment. What is the power of that passion which creates at least nine-tenths of all the business of our courts, and sends at least nine-tenths of all our criminals to the penitentiary; that has most to do in sending men to the insane asylum; which makes a constant warfare between crime and justice; which calls for the revolver so often; and which defaces and deforms so much of human character?

It is this passion that builds the great *distillery*, and keeps the fires glowing day and night, regardless and remorseless as to the ruin that flows far and wide in consequence. The distiller don't think of the appetite of the drunkard, but he *does* think of the enormous profits of his business. So that love of money is the direct parent of every distillery in the world, and of all the sorrows and crimes created by it.

The *theatres* which crowd our cities, and which are so many illuminated gateways to ruin, are built and their actors trained by this passion. Not for the honor or reputation—

for virtuous society will for ever exclude such—but because money can be made quickly and abundantly, do they exist. The question is never asked, Will the theatre be for the good of the community? or, Will it destroy the young? Will it be a blessing, or a curse? but, Will it bring money? The owner of the theatre and the actor care nothing about the community any further than as a means of making money. It is this love of money which builds and makes all the theatres in the world what they are; and hence I only say what you all know, when I say the love of money is the root of all evil.\*

If you look into families and trace the secret workings of the disorders that end in separations, allowances, divorcees, and ruin, you will find that the desire for money is the cause far oftener than is usually supposed.

The *piracies* on the ocean, to prevent which all civilized nations have to join in a continual

\* I see by the papers that in one of our cities, the income of about a dozen theatres has been, for six months, but little short of seven hundred thousand dollars; that is, more than one hundred thousand, on the average, to each establishment a year. Suppose it cost as much to support a dozen churches. Each theatre would sustain at least two colleges.

patrol of oceans and seas, as is plain, come from this love of money. It is easier to steal and rob than to earn. So that the love of money is the root of all piracies.

Then the *murders* that are so frequent, probably in eight cases out of ten grow out of the same cause. The calendars of our courts, were they at hand, would, I feel sure, amaze the community by revealing the proportion of murders that originate in this love of money.

*Slavery* too, with all its evils entailed on the master and on the bondman, is caused by this master passion. I am aware that it gratifies the love of power in two ways: first, by giving the owner of the slave direct control over his body and soul; and secondly, by placing all that the slave earns in the hands of the master, so that he feels the power which money gives; and when a man has in his hand the power which will buy hundreds of men, soul and body, and their posterity after them, you cannot doubt that he is conscious of his power, and must be a wonderful specimen of humanity not to be proud and arrogant. Slavery ministers to this love of power directly

and strongly, and we are not surprised at the results which have been manifested in our day. Slavery grows out of this root directly.

The same remark will very nearly apply to *wars*. The friction of commerce and the driving of trade gives opportunities for the infringement of treaties, for the violation of justice, for appeals and reprisals, for smuggling and concealment, till nations become sore, and the result is wars. I am not able, of course, to tell the precise proportion of the wars which have desolated the earth which might be traced back to the love of money; but I feel sure, a very large proportion. We all know that this deep love of money had much to do with our late civil war, leaving a history that will make the ears of the world to tingle for a long time to come.

The grinding of the poor, the oppression of the needy, the bowing down of the feeble, the shuffling in bargains, the concealment in tax-paying, the strifes at law, and a mass of wickedness and crime, are sown broadcast by the hand of avarice all over the earth.

If I am right in these views, you see that

the love of money is not the deepest passion of the soul; but is a direct minister to one that is deeper—the love of power, the master passion of the human soul; and we want money to gratify that. I think it is plain that this is so, from the fact that this love of power is the earliest passion developed in the child, the strongest in manhood, and the last that dies, even if it does die, in age. We all, the poor and the rich, have it; but we are not all equally successful in gratifying our desires. You can outgrow other sins, wear out animal passions, outlive the desire for show and the pleasures of life. The old man don't want fashions, nor the dance, nor boon companionship, nor office, nor honors; but he *does* want money; that is a power which his feeble hand can grasp; it is a power he can *feel*. Other temptations lose their power, desires fail, other sins drop off as you pass along; but covetousness never grows cold—avarice is always young. The old man can't make bargains, but he can reckon and rereckon up his interest, and calculate dividends—Oh how he loves to do it over and over—and know just how

much he will be worth next year, and five years hence. This devil follows the soul and engages the thoughts everywhere. In the house of God the work goes on ; and I am not uncharitable in fearing that it often follows us to the communion-table, and even into the pulpit. Your own conscience will tell you whether this is so or not. Every man knows that it grows upon him with years, and unless he is more than careful, becomes his master. It is strong in the soul, even when the hand is too feeble to hold the evidence of possession.

You will wish me, I hope, before I close and leave this subject, to say a few words as to the REMEDIES to be used to destroy, or at least to counteract this great passion in the human soul.

1. Understand then, that the love of money is only something that ministers to a higher passion—the love of power, the desire for independence, the same thing that turned angels into devils, and drove our first parents out of Eden. It is the feeling that would dethrone God, and cut the creature loose from him. It is self-idolatry. The love of money is minis-

tering to the strongest passion in any depraved being. It is not to be laughed down. It has its roots in the deepest places. It is a rival, and *the* rival of your Maker; and the contest is, which shall be enthroned in the heart and rule your spirit. Will you be a God, or a subject? And just in proportion as you give way to this love of money, you feed a conscious power which must separate you further and further from God. You don't stop at the pile you accumulate. The mighty engine that drives you to accumulate so eagerly, lies back of the property—it is that deep, unuttered desire to be powerful as fate, and independent as God. Money is only the food for the dragon that lives deep in the temple, and which grows by all that is brought to it. To make the soul safe then, the first thing is to enthrone God in the heart; he can fill it; and instead of trying to become an independent power, you lean upon him. You don't feel the need of power. You partake of the power of omnipotence. When you have power given you to become the sons of God, you don't want this creature-power, and you par-

take of the fulness of the Godhead. Cease to attempt to work an independent machinery. Make God all in all, and this overpowering desire for money ceases. You curtail its power by bringing the soul into sympathy with God's great nature and plans and arrangements. The love of money is the root of all evil, because it feeds a desire to cut away from God, and take our destiny into our own hands.

2. If you wish to be delivered from this love of money, then give freely.

I trust you can see a new reason why "it is more blessed to give than to receive." Giving diminishes the consciousness of power. Accumulation, even in receiving, increases it. Giving creates a new feeling—the love of conferring happiness, and this weakens the love of money. If now you are conscious that you love to add up and calculate your property, and think how much more you are to be worth next year than you are now, depend upon it you are cultivating the master passion of the soul. Your only safety is to give away, give freely and often, not merely as a duty, but as

a matter of self-preservation. It is the safety-valve which you must open often. If you wish to counteract a power that will cling to you in old age, and follow you even to the coffin, then don't be afraid of giving freely. And hence, when I make a plea for benevolence, you see that I feel I am doing that which will be for your safety and blessedness. God or mammon must have the heart, and all we can do to dethrone mammon is for your good. You starve a passion by taking away its food; and giving is one of those kind provisions which Providence has made to prevent the soul from becoming a self-worshipper. Remember that "the covetous man whom the Lord abhorreth," is constantly feeding the deepest passion of a depraved spirit. Therefore do n't hesitate to give freely; for without doing it, you will most certainly be ruined by the love of money.

3. You must pray fervently against the love of money.

One difficulty you meet with in regard to this subject is, that it is so easy to cover up the love of money with specious names. Econ-

omy is a duty; and avarice presses this duty into his service, and we think we are only economical, when we are covetous. You must provide for your own family, and avarice interprets this to mean, get and keep all that you possibly can. Foresight and prudence are virtues, but perverted by avarice, they are fearful sins. I don't think I have yet seen a man who thought he was covetous. Among all the prayers I have heard in the prayer-meeting, and the deep confessions of sin made, I have never yet heard the sin of covetousness confessed. The sin is so universal, so hidden and so powerful, that we are hardly conscious of its existence. And because you don't and wont confess it in public prayer, there is the more need that you pray over it in secret.

Now, my reader, are you conscious that you have ever earnestly prayed over this great danger, this loving money, which is the root of all evil? Other sins destroy the body, make you feeble, prematurely old; but this dries up the soul, withers the sympathies, hardens the heart, and makes men feel that

they are gods, and may secretly gloat over the possession of a power which makes them safe, till the separation between the soul and God is too wide even for the cross of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit ever to diminish. Oh man of God, if there be any one thing for which you ought fervently to pray, it is that you may be saved from loving money, which "is the root of all evil."

## XXIV.

## TOBACCO-RAISING CHRISTIANS.

No one need be alarmed at my caption. I don't profess to be a teacher—on tobacco. I am seeking light. But I have such earnest requests coming from Pleasant Valley, and elsewhere, asking my opinion on this subject, that I am at a loss what to do. Not having raised, chewed, or smoked a hill of tobacco, or ever having an ancestor, so far as I know, that did, alas, how poorly qualified am I to discuss this great matter. They tell me that the fairest portions of New England are becoming covered with the plant, and that all classes, farmers, lawyers, doctors, and deacons—all except ministers—have gone into tobacco-raising; that in the beautiful Pleasant Valley all the church members, all even to Deacon Swineburne, who held out to the last, have gone into it. They thought that the deacon would stand

“faithful found,  
Among the faithless faithful only he.”

But the tide was too strong, the fashion too universal, the gains too large, and he, the last of the church, has so far put off the garments of light as to enable him to spend the remainder of his life—in raising tobacco!

Now, my dear Deacon Swineburne, will you please sit down and let me ask you a few questions, just for information; for I confess my ignorance. Let me talk, not with your purse, nor your neighbors, but with your conscience.

You are going this season, they tell me, to raise tobacco. Of course you want to raise all you possibly can; and you want the sunshine and the dew and the rain carefully poured on your field. And you know very well that every thriftless husband, and every rowdy, and every widow's son who smokes or chews, helps to raise the price. You know that the great amount of tobacco used is by the poor, and that to get it they will and do deprive their wives of clothing and their children of bread. Now the question I wish first to ask: *Is this article a blessing to the world?* Wheat, corn, cattle, every thing for the sus-

tenance of the human body, is a blessing. Is tobacco? Do you think, honestly, that if every man, woman, child, minister, and deacon, in the land should go to smoking or chewing this year, and raise your crop fivefold in value, the effect would be good on human happiness, on revivals of religion, and on the salvation of the earth? How is it in Pleasant Valley, deacon? I am told you not only all raise it, but all use it, fathers, sons, nephews, and neighbors, all use it plentifully and more and more. Well, sir, is your church spiritual in proportion? are your prayer-meetings well attended and your prayers all fervent? Are your young people turning to the Lord and giving the dew of their youth to him, or are they seeking, in gayety and amusements, to shut God out of all their thoughts? You know how this is, and you can form a pretty clear estimate how far this increase of tobacco-using is to elevate the piety of your church, prepare the way for a revival, and bring the blessing of Christ upon your Zion. You may think these are not proper questions. Perhaps not. I told you I was ignorant and want light.

Another thing, my dear deacon ; you pray daily, I trust ; fervently, I hope. Well, sir, can you pray heartily on this business, and ask the Lord to send you rain, for your tobacco will suffer ; to keep away the frosts, or they will kill your tobacco? And the *worms*—what mischievous fellows! Why, I am told you have to hunt them one by one, and crush them without mercy, or else they will eat up your tobacco, and become great, disgusting creatures. How could they become any thing else? Well, do you pray about the *worms*, and thus obtain the aid of Providence to keep them down? Parson Harms prayed for his *bees*, a great dependence of his poor people for support ; and Rowland Hill prayed for his sick horse, which he much needed to carry him to his preaching-places ; and why may not you pray about the tobacco-worms? Do you think they will be very mischievous this year? As you are going into the business for the first time this year, you will, of course, embrace all in your prayers that ought to be included, and I thought that perhaps you might forget the worms! I am very ignorant

on the subject. I am told that your valley is one of the most beautiful spots in the world, and that it is all now to be turned into a huge tobacco-field. Well, sir, have you a doubt as to the result—that within half a century it will be exhausted, burnt up, dried up, and cursed, just as the beautiful fields of Virginia have been by the same process? You can't enrich your lands except by raising grass and stock, and that you can't long do if you fertilize your fields to raise tobacco. The question I wish to ask here is, Are you willing to do your part to burn over, destroy, and utterly ruin your beautiful place? The result is inevitable. A tobacco-raising place must and will eventually run out and become poor. Try it as long as Virginia has, and see what the results will be! And when, in after-years, some poor creature, with his pipe in his mouth, shall stand at your grave and read your name, will he bless you, even though you were the greatest tobacco-raising Christian in the whole valley? I ask for information.

You know that our dear Saviour when on earth was a mechanic—a carpenter. Do you

believe he ever did or would have made dice-boxes to sell, even though they might have brought a very high price? You can't answer that question, perhaps. Well, I will so put it that you *can* answer it. He might have been a farmer instead of a mechanic. Suppose he had been, and his life had been spent in your sweet valley till he began his ministry, do you believe he would have raised tobacco? Can you imagine such a thing? You can believe that Peter might "go a fishing" and Paul make tents, but can you conceive of them as tobacco-raisers? You know, too, that in these times of high prices, we ministers have to cut very close, far closer than you have any idea of; we don't want to be talking about salaries and money, and we do shudder to run in debt. What say you, shall we too turn in and raise tobacco? Would it not make every one feel humble and confess that he was "a worm," if not a tobacco-worm, "and no man?" What do you wish us to do? We can, I doubt not, raise good tobacco. I ask, you see, for information, nothing else; and surely our good Christian friends won't let us be pinched, if by

showing us a little we can raise the weed as well as they. What do you say to that, good Deacon Swineburne?

“Every body uses tobacco.” Not so fast. No decent woman uses it; and thus we have half the world exempt. No child uses it, unless by long teaching it learns. The greater part of the world loathe it. But many do use it, we confess. Not long since a gentleman with a cigar in his mouth, told me that his “cigars cost him annually more than the bread for all his family,” and that family was large. The ladies, kind souls, will endure smoking and chewing, any thing that we, the other sex, claim for our comfort. But now and then one, like the usually good-natured Miss Mitford, will break out. “Whenever,” says she, Works, p. 335, “one thinks of Sir Walter Raleigh as the importer of this disgusting and noisome weed, it tends greatly to mitigate the horror which one feels for his unjust execution. Had he been only beheaded as the inventor of smoking, all would have been right.”

Now I don’t want to be too positive, and so I ask as a learner. And, good deacon, if

you are to become a tobacco-raising Christian, and the business is all right and useful, and such as you will be willing to spend your life in, and for which you are willing to be judged at last, why, God speed thee. May you prosper so that it can be engraved on your tomb-stone, "Here lies Deacon Swineburne, a devoted Christian, an uncovetous disciple, and—the greatest tobacco-raiser that ever lived and died in Pleasant Valley."

## XXV.

## A QUEER OLD LADY.

How different people appear at different times; as when we are sick or well, rejoicing or mourning, laughing or weeping. A few days since I met an old lady who nodded very familiarly to me, and yet I hesitated to call her by name, lest I should miscall it. She looked old, and yet young; soft and smiling, and yet wore stern frowns. She was fair in face, yet her hands were iron. It seemed as if the wind would blow her away, and yet she moved with the strength of an elephant.

“Why, sir,” said she, “you seem to stare at me, though you have seen me a thousand times before.”

“That may be, madam, but I never saw you so loaded down with all sorts of things. I am curious to know about them. Would it be rude if I should ask you a few questions?”

“Not at all. Ask away.”

“Well, what are you going to do with those small, thin, ladies’ shoes?”

“Why, make the ladies wear them, to be sure.”

“Not this cold, wet season! Why, I can hardly keep my feet warm in these thick, double-soled boots. I must have overshoes. How can they wear such thin, cold-catching shoes?”

“O sir, I have only to bring them to them, and the dear creatures put them on, and never hesitate a moment. They know me.”

“And those little half-dresses hanging on your arm?”

“They are to be put on little children in cold weather, or to walk out in; naked at the knees, naked at the neck, and hardly covering half the body. You can’t think how eager parents are for these dresses.”

“What have you in this little tin box?”

“Lozenges, sir; troches, hoarhound candy—things that always go with thin shoes and thin dresses. And this bright, red box, sir, contains what is called ‘conscience salve,’

which I always keep on hand to rub on the conscience when any one feels that he has done wrong in obeying me. It's in great demand, sir, and a certain cure."

"What have you in that bundle, madam?"

"This? Why, a few knick-knacks which I sometimes distribute in Sabbath-schools, in the shape of dialogues, speeches—things to make people laugh, and to prevent the school from feeling too serious, or thinking too much about religion. You must understand, sir, that I continually have to attend church to regulate things there, and see that the bonnets are right, the rings are bright, and dresses complete; yet religion itself I hate as poison. And here is a box of the finest—what shall I call it? It is a sort of wit and smartness, which I deal out to preachers, with which they spice their sermons, and become popular. I sell them by the gross. They are growing in demand, and they are a real saving of conscience and heart-ache. Warranted to keep in any climate—a kind of sensation-powder."

"Pray, madam, what are those screws for?"

“ Why, to pinch the feet, and make them look small, without regard to corns and bunions. They can’t wear those little, dear little shoes, except you have these pinchers to go with them.”

“ And that great heap of books in your arms?”

“ Those? They are the latest, most exciting, and the weakest, most silly novels. But I hand them out, and shake my head with a smile, and crowds read them.”

“ Well, madam, I’m very inquisitive, I know; but I do want to know what you have in that bag thrown over your shoulder?”

“ A great variety of valuables; such things as ‘late suppers,’ in great demand, and which send people to the grave early, and thus make room for more. Then there are ‘late hours,’ and ‘late rising,’ and all manner of hair-dressing and expensive dressing, things that ladies must have, even if their husbands fail. Here are diamond pins and rings, just the thing to stir up envy and create extravagance. Here are gold watches, cigars, meerschaum pipes, gold-headed canes, eye-glasses, and all man-

ner of things to suit all manner of people. And I laugh and coax, and frown and command, till I get them to wear and use them, and do just what I please. Now I have stopped to talk with you a few moments ; don't you see what a crowd have gathered round me ? low necks, thin shoes, muslin dresses, tight boots ; some on crutches, some coughing, some breathing short, all crowding to get near me ; and when I move, you will see how they all run, and rush, and crowd after me. Oh, sir, I am the great power of the world. I rule kings and queens, beggars and philosophers. Do n't you see ? ”

“ Truly, madam, truly. And now *may* I ask your name ? ”

“ Name ! FASHION, sir ! my name is MRS. PREVAILING FASHION. I thought everybody knew me.”

## XXVI.

## ANONYMOUS LETTERS.

GENTLE reader, did you ever see a white-faced hornet? Did you ever have one, great, bold, and with a loud, trumpet note, dash at your face and strike you with his peculiar weapon? How you are shocked, stunned, and almost knocked down by the blow. How you wish every hornet in the world was exterminated! And yet one can't but have a kind of respect for the fellow's boldness, and the fearlessness with which he strikes his open, decided blow.

I am inclined to think the sting of the honey-bee is, on the whole, the most trying. You are conscious of being her friend and even admire her; that you would be glad to do her good, defend her hive from the moth miller, shelter her from the storms of winter, and make war with the bee-eater on her account. You know too that the very venom and poison of the sting is made out of the

very honey of the flowers. With what chemical power she can make so sweet a substance into one so fearful is a mystery to you. The fact is all that you know. You can forgive the savage Arab hornet much easier than the bee. The one is a wild marauder; the other is a cherished favorite of civilization.

Gentle reader, did you ever receive an anonymous letter? I don't mean one of those flowery, painted, embossed or garnished valentines that look so magnificent to boys and girls under twelve; but one of those secret, stinging, almost satanic epistles, which come to you in disguised writing, and which, like the poison of the bee made out of honey, are made up of perverted goodness, and have just enough of truth in them to make them terrible? If you never did, you don't know every thing!

They are always from professed friends; but you have common sense enough to know that no real friend would ever approach you in that way; that none but a bitter enemy would thus play the hypocrite; that none but a coward would thus stab in the dark; and

none but a sneaking spirit would descend to such means to attain his end. Ministers of the gospel probably have more of these annoyances than all other men put together. I have known, and do now know, of some of the very best of these servants of Christ who have been grieved, wounded, and tormented by these invisible weapons. I have known men dismissed, driven away from their fields of labor by them. And if Mr. A. or Mr. B., who has been in the habit of writing such letters to his minister, should perchance see this, I wish just to say to him, "Sir, to a frank, honest, manly character this conduct is the most contemptible of all the mean things that you ever did." My pen gives out in trying to express the contempt I feel for such a man. Such letters are a libel on manhood, a perversion of gifts, and I have no doubt, are an abhorrence to the Lord. If you don't like your minister's preaching, if his talents are too small to meet yours, if his taste does not coincide with yours, why not go and tell him so, or, at all event," act openhanded? No man ever wrote an anonymous letter unless because he wanted

to work in the dark, and do that under its covering that he would be ashamed to do openly. An ingenuous, kind, or true man, will never write such a letter. Why leave out the name? Why try to disguise the hand, except because you are not willing to own your own offspring?

A few words to those who have the honor to receive such letters. Of one thing you may be sure, and that is, that the man who writes an anonymous letter to you is afraid of you. In *his* estimation, at least, you are a power, and one that he dreads. He wants to remove a fear. Very likely he over-estimates your power, but at any rate he confesses his fear. No man loads and shoots at a floating log, as it lies in stagnant water. In the next place don't let the writer know that you ever received or felt the blow. In nine cases out of ten you will know from whom the letter came, as truly as if it had been signed by his real name. Keep cool, and keep silent. Terribly you will feel the sting; but don't wince. Don't show it, speak of it, or let it be known. You can't pull out the sting, nor prevent the

smart, but you can bear it in silence. You will very likely ask, "Why, sir, am I mistaken in supposing that *you* have received such letters, and are speaking from experience?" Truly, kind reader, I have received many such in my day, but not of late years. The skin of some animals becomes so tough by time that common leaden balls will not pierce it, and there is no use in firing. Yes, I have received many such letters; but so perverse was I that I can't recall one that I think did me any good, or that threw one ray of light on the path of duty, or was otherwise than an evil. I never showed one or told of one, even to the wife of my bosom. I turned them into ashes as quickly as possible, and locked up the secret in my own bosom. It was one of the very few secrets that a man should not tell even to his sympathizing wife. They will do no hurt, and leave the writer more powerless, if you have enough of the grace of God and of a sterling will to keep silent. It is now many years since I have been honored with an anonymous letter, and most likely I shall never receive another. But I have younger breth-

ren in the ministry who may be thus tormented. Let me say to such, that if they reveal the fact of having been thus stabbed it will hurt them. You may feel and carry your troubles to your Master, but keep silent.

I think that the ministry is the only profession that is often tormented in this way, and I have been trying to divine the reason. It is plain that the business and duties of a minister are such that all feel that they understand and are competent to direct about it. They don't pretend that they could advise a lawyer, or understand his business so as to guide him. So of the physician. They don't know the beat of the pulse, or the hieroglyphies on the medicine recipe. But religion is something that *all* think they understand, about which they are abundantly competent to give advice, and over which assume control. Hence there are hundreds and even thousands, probably, who can assume to guide a minister, who would feel incompetent to manage a lawyer or a doctor. The Lord's people are all prophets in this respect. It is a pity that we need and must have so many conservators; but how

thankful we ought to be that we have so many able and willing to relieve Moses and Aaron of the burdens of the priesthood! It is a pity, too, that ministers are so sensitive, and that

“A kick that scarce would move a horse,  
May kill a sound divine.”

I have known a minister almost thrown into convulsions in public by one of these missiles.

I beg my brethren to cultivate a simple, open, frank, and childlike spirit—confident that He who hath called them into his service will protect them from the pestilence that walketh in darkness. Let them stand firm in the faith of the Lord, and the movements of the birds of the night will no more injure them than the flapping of the bat’s wing against Gibraltar will hurt the rock.

Perhaps I ought to say and allow that all anonymous letters do not come from the strong. Sometimes very weak bows shoot such arrows, but such seldom reach the mark. There are many really good but weak trees on the hill of Zion; and in the garden of the Lord there is not only spikenard, calamus, cassia, and the like, but also “*aloes*,” and if the latter gives

forth its own fragrance now and then, it only acts naturally. These feeble disciples, sometimes disappointed, sometimes really wishing for power to do good, can think of no way so sure as to stir up the minister now and then with an anonymous letter. We must bear with such, and be thankful for their very weakness. But let me entreat all such to take some other way of doing good, and not torment their minister by thrusting needles into his back, even if they are not darning-needles. I should be afraid to say how many ministers have thus been worried till they asked a dismission and left their fields of usefulness, were it not that I hope what I have said will do something towards counteracting the evil. The ministers will not tell their best friends of these troubles; they may not. For them, "*flere et meminisse relictum est.*" Silence, silence, dear brethren; there is great power in silence. If you weep, wash your eyes in cold water, and don't let others see your tears.

## XXVII.

## CHRISTIANS TRAVELLING.

THIS year, and indeed every year, and more and more, Christians and Christian families will leave their homes for a summer tour or a residence of a few months. The number of such is so great, and the places to which they resort are so numerous, and their influence for good or for evil is so decided, that I have a strong desire to address a few words of kindness to such. Not unfrequently a single hint may influence our actions for a long time.

The reasons why good people, men and women, go away from home during the summer, are such as these:

A desire for change. Every one knows that he cannot long meet the ever-returning duties of life without somewhat of a tread-mill feeling. You long to break the monotony. You are willing to leave your comfortable

home and encounter dust, and heat, and small rooms, and crowded places, and poor accommodations, for the sake of a change. You hope to see new scenes, become acquainted with new faces, meet old friends, see the changes going on in the world, have something to make you forget the wearing labors of life, and have something to think of and talk about after you return to your home. This change refreshes the spirits, restores the energies, and creates courage to go back and take up the burdens of life. Or,

Rest from toil. We are not only a working people, but we crowd and overtask our powers of body and of mind. We undertake a little more than we can do, lift burdens a little heavier than we can carry. The man of business under the pressure and stimulus of his concerns, the mother under the anxieties and toils of her large family, the student and the man making drafts upon the brain all the time, feel that they need rest. They can have it only by dropping every thing and going away. They feel that if they could only flee to yonder mountain they would be at rest.

They judge rightly, and they ought to go and rest. Or,

To recover health. As soon as we can get our sick friend off the bed, and not unfrequently before, we urge him to go away from home—for a change of air for the lungs, scenery for the eye, food for the stomach, and out-of-door exercise. Nature provides her medicines in this way. In what the renewing power of a journey consists, it would be difficult to tell. But the fact is certain that many a sick man, and many a feeble woman, and many a puny child, is restored and recovered by absence from home, especially if that home be in the city.

Now all these are legitimate and good reasons why the Christian should at times leave home and travel, or change scenery during the summer heat. And a great multitude will do so. And I am wishing to give them a few kind hints how and what to do in these circumstances.

1. Don't leave your Christian character at home. I am afraid that many, perhaps thoughtlessly, so sink their Christian charac-

ter out of sight when abroad, that they are not recognized as Christians. In several cases which I distinctly recall, I have spoken to gentlemen, whom I met at large hotels, on the greatest of all interests, and have been surprised to have them tell me they were Christians. From my intercourse with them I ought to have suspected it before. Some will go to places of amusement, to the ball-room and the like, when away from home, when they never would have done it where well known. Some sink Christ out of sight, and feel that for the time being, certainly, they may conform to the world. Now the safest and the wisest and the easiest way is, to be an open, known Christian everywhere. Let the flag of the sacred army be seen. Don't let people have to *guess* whether you are a Christian or not. You will need to be very careful about secret devotion when away. You can't carry your closet and your habits with you. Conveniences will be wanting. But let the temptations be what they may, don't forego secret prayer. The life-blood of the soul will dry up if you do. It is the time and the place, above all others, to

carry and show the image of Christ. Don't, then, do or omit to do otherwise than what you would at home.

2. Be careful about violating the Sabbath. At home you have to show your example in your family, in the church, and perhaps in the Sabbath-school. You are now loose from these. You will be tempted, when abroad, to break the Sabbath by travelling, by riding, by walking, by visiting, and by worldly conversation, and the temptations will surely return in one of these forms every returning Sabbath. I must be allowed to say that Christians in the country are often surprised at what they see visitors, Christians too, do on the Lord's day. They are watched just as they would be, and no otherwise, were they at home. And if any professing Christian thinks he can violate the Sabbath and not be marked, he is greatly mistaken.

3. Don't neglect public worship when from home. On this point there is an unaccountable degree of irresponsibility. You are not with your church and people, and feel that you have nothing to do with any other. But

you should know that you are often thrown near a small, feeble church. The tide of the world almost sweeps the little band away. They need all the encouragement and countenance and prayer they can have. If you stay away, or go but a part of the day, and take no interest in them, are you doing as Christ would do? They love to see the stranger within their gates. They love to feel that the stranger's heart beats with love to the same Redeemer, and that you feel the same wants, and go to the same source for the supply. Let there be no opportunity when health will possibly allow it, which you do not improve to attend public worship when away from home. Leave your blessing and your prayers in every church and with every people where you go. If you can visit the Sabbath-school, smile upon the children, greet the teachers, and perhaps say a word of encouragement, don't fail to do it. Let your light shine in every synagogue wherever you go.

4. The prayer-meeting. You will find wherever you go, almost without exception, a weekly prayer-meeting. There will proba-

bly be but few who sustain it. They are the life of the church. And it is a grievous fact men and women who feel bound to attend and sustain a prayer-meeting in their own church at home, feel no responsibility when abroad. I have been at places where were hundreds, literally, of Christian professors, and yet not a dozen would be found at the humble prayer-meeting. I know of no way in which you can spend a single hour more profitably to yourself, or more to the comfort and strengthening of the few faithful ones, than to go into their meeting for prayer. It may not be your particular denomination. Don't care for that. All the better, for it gives you the opportunity of seeing that you are free in the Lord, and are bound by no cords of bigotry. Go to their little meetings. Sing with them; pray with them; and if you say a word let it be a word of cheer and encouragement. Let it be to strengthen their faith. But don't go back to your home feeling conscious that you have not attended a single prayer-meeting since you left! It would be a fearful mark against you. It would, I feel sure, grieve the divine

Redeemer. And yet, how many do it! I could tell some painful facts on this subject.

5. Finally, don't return home feeling that you have done no good. You are out on a mission. To be sure, your own immediate health is the great object, perhaps; but you go as a living epistle of Christ, known and read as such. And if you go and return without doing good, it will not be because you have not had the opportunity. You *can* do good, and you ought. And if you return home feeling that you have thrown off responsibility, and forgotten your high calling, and neglected to do for Christ, as you might have done, you will, if really a Christian, have a terrible reckoning with conscience.

Good by, Christian traveller! A pleasant journey to you and a safe return; but Oh, just say before you start, that you will be the better for my simple admonitions!

## XXVIII.

## OLD SAMP.

THEY took great pains, in building the good ship Samson, that every timber and plank and bolt should be the best possible. They gave the ship a strong man's name, and yet talked about *her* and *she*. Just before she was completed, there was a great consultation as to what kind of *head* should be carved and placed under her bowsprit for the “figure-head.” At last it came to them that, as she was named “Samson,” nothing but the head of a Jew, old, marked, decided, and fierce, with shaggy brows, sunken eyes, and long hair, would meet the case. Accordingly, a Samson's head, so far as the carver could conceive, was duly made and placed on the bow of the ship, as if to see where she was going, and give warning when he saw any danger. So she was launched, rigged, loaded, and made ready for sea. When launched, a

multitude sent up a loud shout as she gracefully slid into the water, and sat like a duck. When rigged and ready for sailing, her beautiful form was the admiration of everybody. At last the captain and the crew came on board; and then the pilot came, and quietly gave his orders. The sails swelled out, the yard-arms were turned, and the glorious ship moved off, obeying every hint of her helm, and was soon walking over the great waves of the ocean, her head directed straight to the distant port to which she was bound.

The “figure-head” at her bow seemed to enjoy his position. When the winds blew and the seas dashed over him, he never winked or took pains to spit out the salt water. There he remained through many a storm and many a blow, unmoved and undismayed. By day or by night, he seemed ever to have his eyes open. The sailors called him “Old Samp.” After making many voyages to different and distant parts of the world, all at once it seemed as if “Old Samp” had become alive, and was heard to talk to himself every night, after all

the crew had turned in except the night-watch. He began in a kind of whisper, which grew louder and louder, till the sailors declared they understood every word that he said. "Come on, old ship," he would frequently say, talking of course to himself, "I have guided you so far and so long, and never made a mistake. Hast thou not been twice round the world, and had nothing to do but to follow me? Have I not always been at my post, and in the darkness of night, and among rocks and breakers, safely led thee on, so that thou hadst only to follow me? To be sure, I have heard the captain shout, and the men run, and haul, and pull, and seen the old ship reel and stagger; but after all, they had only to let the ship follow me, and all was safe."

"Halloo, Old Samp," cried the sailors, "what's all this muss?"

"I'm only talking to myself."

"Yes, but you are talking like a fool; just as if *you* guided and managed the ship."

"Well, don't she follow just where and

when I lead her? Answer me that, will you?"

"To be sure. But what do you suppose the ship has a helm, a captain, and a crew for?"

"Why, to follow me. They do no good. *I* guide the ship."

"You old heathen; if we don't strike the broad-axe into you, and split your head open. What a vain fool to think that *you*, who can't shut an eye or lift a finger, are the guide of this ship."

Old Samp made no reply, but kept muttering to himself, "After all, it's I that do it. It's I that do it."

A few nights after this conversation, as the ship was ploughing her way through the fogs that gather around and over the banks of St. George, with a light at her mast-head and another at her stern, with three men on the look-out lest she should run into some vessel or against some iceberg, the fog-bells tolling loudly, "Old Samp" seemed to be wide awake. "Aha! how timid they are. Just as if I could n't see every danger,

and guide the ship just as I always have done."

"Sail ahead!" sung out the watch on deck at that instant.

"Port helm!" cried the captain in the next breath.

Quickly the noble ship obeyed her helm, and swung off and away from the vessel, just escaping a horrible collision, and yet giving a slight knock against the end of the stranger's bowsprit. It was hardly felt; and yet that little jar was enough to knock poor Old Samp's head off his shoulders, and leave it rolling and tossing on the waves. The ship moved on her way, and no one for some weeks knew that Old Samp was gone.

Poor Old Samp! how much he felt and talked as men do every day, when they think that they guide themselves and their affairs; and that they need and have no Providence behind them, whose hand is on the helm, and who uses other men to guide those who think they guide themselves. Never forget that our wisdom and our reason are about as able to guide us as Old Samp was the ship. The

mind and the skill are far behind, out of sight; but without them we are wrecked. When men who deny God, and think they are so wise, come to die, the world moves on just as it did before, and just as the ship did after poor Old Samp was no more. "Figure-heads" don't guide the ship, but the mind at the helm.

## XXIX.

## BREAKING THE LEFT ARM.

IF my courteous reader never, in the full tide of labors and responsibility, chanced to break his left arm, I feel sure he has some things to learn. I don't refer to the sudden, stunning fall on the ice, when your first consciousness is that you need help, and are faint, and have one limb shattered and helpless ; nor to the swellings, and splints, and bandages, and pains, and arnica, compresses, and long weary nights, and the useless thing hung in a sling, to be carefully carried about ; nor do I refer to the many condolences and congratulations you have "that it was not your right arm," and "how thankful you ought to be that you escaped with the right arm uninjured," etc. You are truly tempted to say, "My good friend, how much more thankful ought you to be, that *neither* of your arms has been broken." How many daily forget this

great mercy. But I took up my pen to speak of the broken left arm.

One night, between sleeping and waking, between opium and pain, I overheard a dialogue between the right and the left hand, by which I was not a little amused, but still more instructed.

“Now, my good fellow,” said Right Hand to Left, “you see just how it is. You may as well be quiet, and get well. You are not much missed, as you hear everybody rejoicing and congratulating the owner that it was *you* rather than *me* who is laid aside. We shall get along admirably without you; and indeed, you are not of much consequence.”

“It may seem so,” meekly replied Left Hand, “but I am hardly satisfied with the place you give me. Will you please tell me wherein your great superiority consists?”

Up started Right Hand, as fierce as a challenging bully—I wonder how the psalmist ever came to call the right hand feminine, and talk about “*her* cunning,” when every attribute is masculine, bold, grasping, pugna-

cious, and unladylike, as possible—and answered thus:

“My superiority! why, in every thing. My owner can’t hold his quill and write a most wonderful piece unless I hold that pen.”

“True, but who holds the paper on which he writes?”

“Who holds the hammer, while the blacksmith forges and shapes his iron?” “And who holds the tongs that grasp that iron and turn it over on the anvil?”

“Who holds the plane, while the carpenter smooths the board?” “And who steadies the board, while he joints and smooths it?”

“When my owner walks the streets, who has the honor to salute, lift the hat, and shake the hand?” “And who holds the travelling-coat and carpet-bag while he does it?”

“In war, who wields the sword and draws the trigger at the right moment?” “And who holds the scabbard while the sword is drawn; and who holds up the gun while it is fired?”

“Who gallantly helps the lady into the carriage?” “And who holds the car-

riage door open while she enters the carriage?"

"You interrupt me and trouble me, and I won't talk if you do so." "I don't want to do that," said Left Hand; "but suppose I ask you a few questions now? you certainly are very skilful in this matter."

"Who shaved our owner yesterday?" "Why, I did, and wanted you to hold his face; and because you was gone, I cut him eight times badly."

"Could n't you help it?" "No, indeed; the best barber in town can't shave a man unless the left hand holds the nose and other parts of the face."

"Will you please, Mr. Right Hand, button that wristband of yours, which is open?" "Why, you know I can't do that. I never did that in my life. You have always done that."

"Won't you please wind up master's watch? we shall want to know when to expect morning." "Pshaw! you know I can't wind up the watch unless you are there to hold it."

“ You surely can wash a tumbler?” “ Not unless you hold it for me.”

“ You can take the money out of the purse, and pay for what our master wants.” “ Not unless you hold the purse. But I can hold the whip, and make old Dobbin go fast.”

“ Yes, if I hold the reins, and guide him while he goes. The real fact is, that with your help alone the master can’t cut the leaves of his new book, or read it when cut. The mistress can’t darn a stocking or make a pudding.”

“ Well, well, Mr. Left Hand, you make out that you are of great consequence ; and I do n’t deny it. I appreciate you ; and have I not held you carefully every night since you have been sick during sleep ?”

“ Yes, and I have been grateful for it. It was just as I should have done for you.”

“ It is possible, dear old helper, I have not realized how much real service you perform. Just tell me how you estimate yourself.”

“ Why, sir, I am to you what a good wife is to her husband. You have the honorable

things to do, and the honorable orders of Mrs. Brain to execute ; but I am always at hand to help. When our owner fell, I leaped out to break the fall, and broke my own wrist, while you flew up into the air and cried, " What an escape I have had!" I am to the body what the wheel-horses are to the stage, taking every twitch and lurch of the carriage. The wife is to her husband what the mate is to the commander of the ship, ever on the watch, managing the crew, while the captain has all the honor of the successful voyage. The wife is the untiring friend of her husband, more jealous of his good name than of her own, never wearied in promoting his interests, never asking for the praise or the honors that fall on him ; continually doing small but necessary things ; meeting the trials of life, the greater part of which fall most heavily on her, without complaining or mourning that her lot is not better. The husband is the Right Hand, and the wife is the Left. The one can do little without the other. You know that, since I have been laid aside, you can't button a collar or tie a cravat. You are the man, and I

am the woman—a help-meet. And I have been thinking, as I have lain here throbbing and aching, that perhaps no man could break his left arm without learning to value his own wife the more. He sees that even the Right Hand is crippled when I am disabled. He learns that uncomplaining, untiring ministry of woman so necessary for the human family, so freely bestowed, so seldom appreciated. Doomed to be the Left Hand, she meets every duty, be her lot high or low, with cheerfulness and alacrity. It can never be too often told to her honor that, when the Redeemer was on earth, though maligned and slandered and persecuted by man, *there is not one instance recorded of his receiving any thing but kindness and sympathy from woman.* Is not this an imperishable crown of honor on the head of woman? And no thinking, observing man can look back upon the path of life which he and his wife have walked hand in hand, without giving her the credit of having done, untiringly, the humble, but necessary duties of life, and helping him to do most of what he has accomplished, and making him what he is.

O woman, Left Hand of the family, thy husband may well praise thee, and value thee more and more as long as he lives."

"Right, right, my true yoke-fellow; thou hast hit it. Henceforth I will look upon thee as my wife; and if I hear people hereafter offering their congratulations that it was not the right hand that was disabled, I at least will feel that I have learned a good lesson by the breaking of the left arm."

## XXX.

*"THE AGE OF THE PRESS."*

HE must be a bold man who doubts that in our day the "Press" throws off its products quicker, faster, and more abundantly than ever before. Everybody reads, and everybody and all his relations write. If the human brain can and does digest and assimilate all that passes into it, as the healthy body does its food, the people of the Lord could all shortly be prophets, and the children of this world would be wiser than ever before. I am not going to risk what little popularity I may have by running tilt against this age, or to doubt that it is the wisest, best, and most desirable age that ever existed. I have lately bought some huge commentaries on the Bible, very bulky and very weighty, measured by the foot or the scales of the counter; and I have the privilege of seeing great weekly religious papers, and vast, barndoors-like daily papers, and I am more and more surprised at the

*amount* of reading one can procure for his money. We have volumes in our daily papers, and hardly less in our weeklies. And what amazing pictorials and histories and biographies they bring to our doors, and thrust into our parlors, and make us almost turn tiger to prevent their being left there.

Carlyle suggests that it would be a great and valuable investment to pay authors for what they *don't* write! By which I understand him to mean, that if writers would produce not more than half what they now do, and have that digested, condensed, and wrought out in the brain, they would well deserve double what they now receive. I often marvel at the long columns and the number of them, and feel that these must all be filled, like the boa constrictor, even though the editor swallow any thing that comes along, hair, bones, horns, and all. And I am not surprised that since the wise, good public buy by the quantity, and demand a great amount for their money, there is, and must be, so much crude thinking, such a spreading out of thought, so many pieces and chapters dashed off, so many unripe no-

tions obtruded on the reader, and such flippant nonsense labelled “wisdom by the package.” If the editor of the magazine or paper pays so much for the bulk, and credits his correspondent by the page or column, where is the inducement for the writer to sit down and think, and turn his thoughts over again and again, then to sift them, and winnow them, condense them, and refine them, till they show the value and the polish of pure silver?

But this is a small evil compared with the often crude, wild, impracticable, and dangerous notions that are scattered broadcast over society by this “age of the Press.” In almost every popular magazine, and in not a few religious papers, you will meet with notions so dressed up, like French cookery, that you hardly see to what you are yielding your mind and heart. Often one writer has to follow another, and try to correct the impressions made or to dilute the poison distilled. The good editor must have so many columns of original matter, and he can’t afford to winnow the chaff from the wheat, or to strain the water before him. He hopes it won’t, on the whole, do any

hurt, and that it will awaken some strong arm to come and sweep it all off. The garden is to look all the better for the weeds that have been pulled up.

Now, I am so far bewildered in looking at this "age of the press," that I verily believe that if our editors dared and would have but half the matter they now have, making it up in large type, or reducing the size of the sheet, and having every writer put his thoughts into half the space he now occupies, paying him well for *what he leaves out*, it would be far better for the present and the rising generation. As things now are, who pretends to read more than a small portion of what is printed? And then how we train the mind to glance over the article, not to read it, not to study it, not to be improved by it, but to get a smoky idea of what it contains! It is like attempting to burn crude peat; you get a vast column of smoke, an abundance of ashes, but not much heat or light. The reader, unconsciously, has his mind diluted, and his memory made into a riddle-sieve, through which every thing passes except sticks and coarse materials. This hasty, undigesting

mode of reading must inevitably make us superficial and soft in all our mental operations. We cannot sit down and make our own minds think, if we train them to live upon the shadows of thought. What I especially desire is, that those who write for the public do not try to see how they can dash off a crude article, how easily they can rattle the box, how quickly they can write what will give them five or ten dollars the page; but how much good sense, correct opinion, and elevated taste, they can weave into every article. Even if this loose writing, and looser thinking in the reader, resulted in no vitiation of the moral sentiments, it does, nevertheless, vitiate the taste, so that a thing that is really a gem in the world of literature is in danger of being overlooked. He who spends life amid the din of the factory, the clanking of looms, and the whirring of spindles, is not so likely to enjoy an exquisite piece of music on the piano, as the man in circumstances entirely reverse. I do not question that this "age of the press" produces much that is valuable. The wheat produced on the field is very large, but bears a small pro-

portion to the chaff. Among all the shells and the debris of the ocean gathered up on the sands of the shore, there is here and there a choice shell or fossil, but it is only here and there. Broken shells and imperfect fragments compose the greater part of what is gathered up.

Now, is there no way to change this fashion of the age, and instead of telling how “the press groans” under its burdens, cannot we make our reading more select, our papers of a higher order, our writers take more pains with their productions? We are often afraid that if we try to give thought instead of words, we shall become dry, and the very light in which we place our ideas will seem dry—*lumen siccum*; but there is no danger, at this day, lest we dive out of sight, or weary the faculties of our readers by deep, original thought. On the other hand, there is great danger lest the press shall demand more and more in quantity, till our writers, like one in Horace, boast how much they can write standing on one foot.

They buy and sell wheat by its *quality*, and so of almost every thing that is merchantable.

Why can't brains be treated in the same way? And is there no way by which those who cater to this "age of the press" can be made to understand that a single sentence or a single thought that will live to after-generations is worth more than a thousand ephemeral articles struck off at a single sitting? I am not disposed to deny that an image or a great thought may, at times, flash across the mind in an instant. Perhaps the germ of all great thoughts thus springs up; but that thought must be turned over and elaborated a great while before it is fit to be printed. What I wish is, that our readers of this generation would not demand such a great mass of matter from the press. They don't read it, they can't digest it, and very much of it is not worth reading. Why can't we have less, and a better quality? And I wish that those who write (and who does not?) would understand that if they will only give us half as much in quantity, but of a superior quality, they shall have more pay in money and in our gratitude. If my reader should say that such as write do not know what standard they do actually

reach, I reply, they do know how much pains they take not to throw out crude thoughts through the press; and they do know just how much labor they have bestowed on their productions. If they don't know, their readers do.

I have no quarrel with this "age of the press." I realize that it is a mighty power for good or for evil; and those who write, and those who print for the Sabbath-schools and the children of this generation, and who speak to thousands through the press, ought to be very anxious to make their power the best possible for the good of men. They tread near presumption if they feel they may write any thing that will sell, or any thing that will be popular. Next to the pulpit, the press is a mighty power in the world. Woe to us if we prostitute or abuse that power.

## XXXI.

## HINTS TO OUR CHURCHES.

THERE is a very general, if not universal, expectation among our churches that the wonderful providences through which we have been carried are to be followed by a great and general revival of religion. It is not necessary to discuss the grounds of such an expectation. We all have it, ministers and people, more or less strong, that the excitement which has been awakened, and the activities which have been generated the past few years will be used by the Spirit of the Lord for the quickening of our churches and the conversion of our people. In very many places the work has commenced, and the noise in the tops of the mulberry-trees is arousing many to be ready. As thus far developed, the movement seems to be marked by the following characteristics:

The movement is slow. There is no earthquake, no wind, no bright fire, but a gradual,

growing, slowly increasing solemnity on the people. So far as I hear, the ministry, as it should be—the eye and the ear and the mouth of the church—is first moved, first burdened, and first goes to work directly for the salvation of souls.

So far, the work begins with the young in the Sabbath-school, taking children from twelve years old and upward, to twenty—a few older and a few younger. The expectation and the prayer is, that it will extend from the young upward. But this, so far, is the most fruitful field.

As a consequence, we as yet do not find conviction of sin, deep, pungent, and overwhelming. Sinners, trembling and quaking in the old way, are not to be found. They doubtless will be when older persons are reached. We are not to be surprised at this. These youth cannot realize sin, when the outward manifestations of it have been so comparatively weak. But convictions they will have *after* conversion, and indeed all the rest of their lives.

Another consequent: there is compara-

tively no great manifestation of joy. The chains have fallen off, but they were not felt to be so heavy as to make their dropping off heard and felt. The convert smiles and sings and loves. He has not been down deep with the bars of earth around him, and therefore he cannot exult. He has not been a cripple long years, and therefore he cannot run and leap and praise God as if he had been. But still, the marks of the work of the Spirit are on him, and the sealing thereof is plainly to be seen.

The meetings hitherto most relied on, as they should be, are the prayer-meetings. They are full, solemn, and good. Much singing is demanded, and employed to great advantage. The praying is marked by solemnity, dependence on God, large desire, and large faith.

There is less of conviction and terror among backsliding Christians than usual in revivals. This is to be regretted, for our churches have been and are covetous, worldly, prayerless to too great a degree, cold in heart, negligent in duty, absorbed in business,

and conformed to the world. We should be glad to see the wanderers return, and with the mouth make confession unto life eternal. They have made and do now make business an excuse for neglecting every duty, except that of giving—a kind of buying-off process.

I wish now to give a few hints to my brethren in the ministry and to our churches as to how and what it seems to me we should now do.

1. Cultivate a large faith. Expect great things, pray for great things, attempt great things. Why may we not believe that God has raised up this nation to be a missionary and a model among the nations of the earth; that he has carried us through the baptism of blood for this very purpose; that he is going to follow it now by a great outpouring of the Spirit; that the blessing is at our door; that He has not created this universal expectation without intending to meet it, and that we may now, every one in his sphere, aid in this work of mercy. Let our faith embrace the nation. If we have not this faith, let us ask for it, seek it, cultivate it. It is easier for *us* to bend the

bulrush than the oak, but is any thing too hard for the Lord? Oh, for a great faith.

2. Let our dependence be very much, if not chiefly, on prayer. With me that is greater than all others. Let the prayer-meeting be filled, be opened often, and go out and ask the dreaming brethren and sisters to come in. Let the prayers be short, humble, tender, earnest, and solemn. Don't spend so much time in "blessing God for the few drops," as in beseeching him for the "great rain of his strength." The prayer we need is that which comes from the burdened heart—the wrestling prayer which turns the Jacobs into Israels. Let the singings be many, short, lively, and sweet. Don't drawl in this. A few should take it upon them to see that the singing is the music of the heart, the song of invitation, and the breathing of hope. Music in a revival should be adapted to our wants, as food and medicine are in certain states of the body. The almost universally good singing in our Sabbath-schools gives us sweet singers at hand. But they cannot sing the old tunes, the "Devizes," the "St. Martins," and

the "Stephens" of other days. We may lament that the age demands lighter food, but they must have the manna that is gathered while the dew is on it.

3. Let the preaching be direct, pointed, uncompromising, solemn, and earnest. Let the sinner feel that he is standing before God face to face. Let him know what God demands, and how he owes the ten thousand talents, and has nothing to pay. Don't be anxious to give the sinner peace or comfort. Let him first feel his need of mercy. Go into his heart and bring out the rubbish and filth that have been accumulating there all his life. The sinner will not take hold of Christ's hand till he feels that he is sinking. Don't be afraid to declare the great doctrines of the gospel, any more than Peter was in that great model revival-sermon on the day of Pentecost. But don't depend so much on the preaching as on the praying.

4. Don't begin to count up and proclaim and talk over the number of converts; rather fix the mind and heart on the great number unconverted. The reaper is to look at the

field not gathered, and press forward to get that in. Don't, above all things, begin to exult that God has done so much for your congregation, your town and city, your denomination. We must have larger views. We must have a greater faith.

5. Take good care of the young converts—not to pet them, but to instruct them, train them, give them the right moulding. They are to be our churches, our ministers, our missionaries. I am expecting that at least a thousand ministers are to come up out of the revivals of this year. See to it that they are the right coin, and have the right die stamped on them. Don't hurry them into the church, but meet them, pray with them, instruct them, and keep your breath warm upon them.

6. So far, we don't see that any new measures are needed. In some places, clusters of churches have conferences, conventions, or something of that sort, and to very great advantage. In 1831-2, we had "Four Days' Meetings," and a vast good they did. I am not afraid of "new measures," but we must *rely* on the Divine Spirit, on the sovereign

mercy of God, and pray as if God must do it all, and yet labor as if it all depended on our faithfulness. We cannot too deeply feel our dependence on the Holy Spirit. We cannot supersede our need of earnest prayer by any activity or bustle or outward demonstrations. It seems to me that never, in this generation, has so great a responsibility been thrown upon the ministers and the people of God, as at this time. He bids us to be up and work. Let the Aarons and the Hurs hold up the hands of the ministry, and let us at once arise and go up and possess the land. The fields are white for the harvest. Who will be a reaper? Reader, will you?

## XXXII.

## WHY THOMAS WAS NOT AT THE PRAYER-MEETING.

“BUT THOMAS, ONE OF THE TWELVE, CALLED DIDYmus, WAS NOT WITH THEM WHEN JESUS CAME.”

WHAT do you suppose was the reason that Thomas “was not with them?” There must have been *some* reason, which *he* doubtless thought a good one.

It was a prayer-meeting in the evening of the Lord’s day, the very day on which He arose from the dead. It was a meeting of the “disciples”—not apostles merely—and Mary who wept at his tomb, and the mother of Jesus, and Martha and others of the sisters were doubtless present.

It was a very remarkable meeting. It must have been in a private house. The doors were fastened for fear of the Jews, who had murdered and sealed their Master up in

the tomb, and who would now be enraged because he had risen from the dead. While engaged in the meeting, the following remarkable events took place.

The doors shut and fastened, Jesus came and stood among them. They knew his face, his form, his person, his voice.

The Saviour blessed them. "Peace be unto you." How did he know where to find them? How did he enter the room?

He "showed unto them his hands," through which the nails had been so lately driven, "and his side," the only side that had been pierced by a spear.

The disciples all now saw him, were satisfied that he had risen from the dead, and their faith and joy were full. "Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord."

He blessed them the second time. "Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you."

He commissioned them to preach his gospel. "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you."

Then he breathed on them—how warm

and sweet that breath—and said, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost.”

He gave them power to declare sins forgiven. “Whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them ; and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained.”

What a prayer-meeting was that. How doubts melted away ; how fear fled from them ; how hope tuned their songs ; how joy lighted up their faces ; how life now seemed worth having ! Christ was in the meeting ; all were there except two—Judas, who had gone out and committed suicide and gone “to his own place,” and one more. It was a great and most important meeting. “But,” we are told, “Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.” *He* did n’t see the glorious face of the Master ; he did n’t hear his voice ; he did n’t hear his blessing of peace ; he did n’t see his hands and his side ; he did n’t feel his breath upon him. He did n’t feel the power of Christ dispelling his doubts and fears and cheering him from his disappointment ; he did n’t have the report of Mary and the women and of Peter, that

He had risen, confirmed with his own eyes. No ; he "was not there." There never was such a prayer-meeting held before ; there never will be another like it as long as the world lasts. But Thomas was not there "when Jesus came."

His absence cost him a great deal. His doubts and unbelief all hung upon him ; nay, they increased. It made him ill-natured. When they all, with beaming faces, told him what they had seen and felt and enjoyed, and the very words of Christ, it only made him feel worse, till he declared that *he* would not believe, not he, unless he could put his fingers in the prints of the nails and thrust his hands into the side of the Redeemer. It cost him the fellowship of his brethren, whom he would not believe. It cost him another long week of doubts and darkness ; it cost him the reproof of his Saviour, and it might have cost him his soul.

*Why* was Thomas absent from the prayer-meeting ? If his excuse had been a good one, I think it would have been mentioned, or the bad consequences would not have followed

which did follow. It is a significant fact that his absence is recorded for all ages to read and know. I have been trying to imagine a reason for this absence of Thomas from the prayer-meeting. And it's very plain that it *might* have been one of several reasons.

1. Thomas might say, "The Sabbath is God's appointment, and the service of the temple—the morning and the evening sacrifices. But this prayer-meeting—it's a mere human thing ; it was got up by the brethren, and there's no evidence that it is according to the mind of God."

But, Thomas, is there not another way by which we may come at the will of God, so plain that it do n't need to be put in the Bible? Why do men eat at regular hours, and sleep and rest at regular hours ? Because it grows out of a necessity of their nature. Very well ; and the social prayer-meeting grows out of the necessity of our moral nature. Good people, in all ages, have *felt* this necessity, and acted on it. They did so in olden times when "they that feared the Lord spake often one to another," "and the Lord

hearkened and heard it." They did so whenever they were in distress, or when religion was in danger. The maidens of Esther fasted and prayed together. So did Daniel and his companions. We *must* have social prayer in order to have spiritual life. It grows out of our nature. You grow cold, you grow unbelieving, you lose the comforts of religion without it. You have no formal, explicit, divine appointment for family prayer; but it grows out of the very nature of the family relations, and God will "pour out his fury upon the families that call not on his name." You know that Abraham prayed with and for his family; so did David; so did Christ. So have good men in all ages. The very constitution of a family requires family worship, and you can't neglect it and not feel that something is wanting. You don't ask for chapter and verse to find that it is the will of God, nor do we that it is his will that men shall attend the social prayer-meeting. But perhaps this was not the reason why Thomas "was not there when Jesus came."

2. He might have been a man of great

taste, one who loved the magnificent temple-service, one who enjoyed “the cymbals” and “the cornets” and “the organ,” “the trumpets” and “the shawms”—the voices of the trained choir made Chenaniah the master of song; but he could n’t enjoy that prayer-meeting. Why, they only read a chapter in the Bible, and then they sung—and *such* singing! Why, there was Peter’s rough, heavy voice, always out of tune; and there was Matthew, always humming on one cord; and there was Bartholomew, always pitching the tune too high or too low, sometimes almost breaking down, and often drawling over the same old tunes. Oh, if they could only have had such singing at the prayer-meeting as they had at the great temple. Alas, Thomas can’t enjoy such singing.

And then his taste is offended again at the manner of conducting the meeting. What tame work they make of talking. How they tell over the words which they heard Christ speak, again and again. How they tell of his calling them, again and again. How Thomas has to hear about the same thing over and

over, when he wants to hear something original, something startling. Oh, if Gamaliel, or some great doctor of divinity, could lead the meeting and pour out an eloquent dissertation; if some learned scribe would come in and lead the meeting and tell us all he knew; but Thomas never enjoys meetings conducted by laymen. He finds fault because they sing old tunes, when he knows they can't sing any other. His taste is offended because the brethren talk and pray so uninterestingly, when he knows that *he* never set a better example of a rightly-conducted meeting. The carriage is small, but he wants a steam-engine to draw it. Or perhaps this is *not* the reason why Thomas "was not there when Jesus came."

3. He might have said, "I have been at work hard all the day, and I am weary and dull, and now if I go up half or three-quarters of a mile to the meeting, I shall get no good; and there will be enough there without me; the meeting will go on. I am sure that when one has been hard at work all the day, he ought to be excused from going up the dark

street to find a prayer-meeting. Besides, if I want to go to a meeting, I can just step into one of the synagogues near by; to be sure, they might reject and scoff at my Master, but they won't recognize me as a disciple, and I shall be careful and not tell them. Of course it can't be expected that working-people like me shall go to the prayer-meeting. To be sure, if I had had nothing to do all the day but sit round and hear and tell the news, I should go; but as it is, I am tired, and don't feel very well, and very likely that close room, with all the doors shut, will give me the headache and unfit me for the duties of to-morrow."

But perhaps that was not the reason why Thomas was not at the prayer-meeting when Jesus came in and blessed it.

4. He is a man of many acquaintances, perhaps, and last night he was at a party at the house of Zabdi the son of Zechariah, near the temple, and the party was very large and very fashionable, and Thomas stayed very late. It was a delightful party, and the entertainment was fine, and there were many

strangers from abroad, and the music was exquisite, and the dancing was continued till a very late hour, and somehow or other Thomas don't feel like going to the prayer-meeting to-night. James and John and Peter don't seem so refined, nor such real gentlemen, as those he met at Zabdi's house. The women who will be there—the sisters of Lazarus and Joses, and a few others—seem very ordinary people compared with those at the party. He wonders why those who go to prayer-meeting *need* be such common sort of people. Not a scribe, not a Pharisee, not a single real gentleman, as the world would call them, among them all. He wonders why it is that going to the party should make him avoid the prayer-meeting. He knows that the good people won't say a word about it; perhaps they don't know of it. He knows he can go in late, and take a seat down near the door; but what if they should notice him and ask him to take a part. What if he should hear Peter's strong voice calling out, "Will brother Thomas please to lead us in prayer?" He knows he is in no state for that, and so he will stay away to-night.

But perhaps this was not the reason why Thomas “was not with them when Jesus came.”

5. It may have been that he *did* calculate to go, had the evening been very pleasant. But it looks likely to rain, and the streets are muddy, and his sandals are not very good, and it is a long way off, and so he concludes he will not attend the prayer-meeting to-night. To be sure, he has been up town several times during the day on business, notwithstanding the broken strap of his sandal, and the deep mud. To be sure, he went much farther last evening to get to Zabdi’s house. But that was not a prayer-meeting. Parties don’t come off every week, but the prayer-meeting does. Rain and mud do not keep Thomas at home, except from the prayer-meeting.

But perhaps this was not the reason why Thomas “was not with them when Jesus came.”

6. Might it not have been that he did not want to hear his imperfect brethren pray? There were James and John, who once wanted to call down fire from heaven and burn up their

Master's enemies ; and those two wanted to be great officers, and stand on the right hand and on the left of the Saviour in his kingdom. How shall he hear such vindictive, ambitious men pray in meeting. And there is Peter, sure to be foremost in speaking and praying, the man who has just been denying his Lord with cursing and swearing—how *can* he hear him pray? And there is Mary Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils ; she will be there, and be sure to sing louder than anybody else. Thomas *wishes* the prayer-meeting was composed of more perfect characters. There is nobody there to make it respectable. Nicodemus won't be there, and Joseph of Arimathaea won't be there—not a single upright, moral, faultless Pharisee ; not a single man who is known in Jerusalem as a nobleman, a great man, or a rich man. But every prayer will be offered and every hymn will be sung by such as Thomas knows are very imperfect men. He knows all their weaknesses, and so he can't enjoy the services. If it were only in some great hall, where there would be a great crowd of people, and where some great

orator who had come from Corinth or from Damascus or from Rome, were to lecture “on the times,” there would be no difficulty; Thomas would be sure to be there. Indeed, almost any thing would bring him out, except the prayer-meeting. He says he’s not edified by that. It is too dull, too monotonous, and too tame. He feels that he is not bound to go any where or do any thing in which he has not present, personal enjoyment. He is bound to do only what he feels adds to *his own* comfort. It is not a question with him whether his presence or absence will encourage or discourage his brethren, but what will be for his own greatest enjoyment.

But perhaps *this* was not the reason why Thomas “was not with them when Jesus came.”

7. Perhaps he would say, “I can’t bear the hot, close room, where there is no ventilation, and I am almost sure to take cold when I come out in the evening air.” And yet he knows that the prayer-meeting will be only an hour long, and he has already said there will not be over twelve or fifteen present; and he

knows that he goes into other crowded rooms where there is no ventilation, and stays there many hours, and his constitution is able to endure it. He don't remember ever taking cold on such an occasion—never.

8. Perhaps he is afraid of the Jews, afraid that they will come upon them and put them in prison; and yet it is but a few days since he was urging that all the disciples should go into Judea with Christ and die with him there. Courage was the very last thing he would allow to be wanting in his case.

9. Perhaps he has some hard feeling towards some one of the disciples. Peter or some one has spoken unkindly to him or of him, and it rankles in his heart. He don't want to attend a prayer-meeting where such men meet to pray. It would be far better, he thinks, if they would come and ask his pardon before going into the meeting. Or,

10. Perhaps he has been driving a hard bargain to-day, and by concealing or by overstating has made such a bargain and gained such an advantage as *he* would not like to have another gain over him, and somehow it hap-

pens that he don't exactly feel like going to that prayer-meeting to-night. He don't know precisely what the reason is, but he thinks he will stay away. And if any one of the brethren should ask him why he was not there, he can say that "it was not convenient," he "had a headache," or something else. Or,

11. Perhaps Thomas was discouraged. He had seen that his Master was put to death, and he forgets that this very event was foretold by him; he has seen him put in the tomb and the tomb sealed, and the Roman soldiers set to guard it, and he forgets that his Master said he would rise again on the third day. It is reported indeed that "the Lord is risen," and has been seen of Mary and of Peter; but in a time of such "excitement," nobody is to be trusted. He is told that the disciples are to have a prayer-meeting to-night, to compare notes and to see what the evidence is that the Lord has risen. But Thomas has made up his mind that it is all a delusion of the imagination, and he will not go. He knows that Christ told him that wherever "two or three should gather together in his name, there he

would be in the midst of them ;" but Christ is dead, and how can a dead man be there. No ; all his hopes have been disappointed. He had hoped that the prophecies and the expectation of all the churches in past ages, and "the Desire of all nations" was come, but all this seems to be at an end. Christ is dead ; and he does not, cannot, and will not believe that he will ever rise again.

So he sunk in discouragement and gloom, and felt morose, and stayed away from the prayer-meeting. "And Thomas was not with them when Jesus came." But perhaps, after all, I have not yet given the real reason why Thomas was not with them. I can think of but *one* more, and that I shall leave you to conjecture.

Perhaps it was the first meeting of the kind he had ever been absent from. Perhaps he was very often absent, and this was his custom. But we have no evidence that he was ever absent from another. I will not say he never *was*, but hope he was not.

But how much he lost. There they met, closing the doors and windows, drawing the

bolts. There was Peter, the tears of repentance hardly dry upon his cheeks, his eyes red with his late weeping, and yet the flush of joy on his face, because his Master has already met him, and showed himself alive, and forgiven him. How he wants to shout and tell of the mercy. There is John, subdued, tender, and loving. Leaning on his arm came in Mary the mother of Jesus, and now his own adopted mother. He stood with her near the cross, and heard the last prayer, and saw the last heaving of the breast as his Lord died. And there are they all; some faces clouded still with doubts and fears; some looking blank, neither believing nor disbelieving; some radiant with hope and joy—not a doubt but the mysterious One has risen. How they sing from the heart. And now they all kneel in prayer. John is leading them in prayer. What a stillness pervades the room. How simple and how beautiful John's prayer. And now they rise from their knees, and JESUS stands in the midst of them, just as he said he would, only the eye can see him now. How awful his presence, his power. They gaze at

him in silence, not even Peter daring to speak. And now Christ speaks: "Peace be unto you." Ah, it's his own voice, it's his own face, his own *form*. It is the Lord himself, risen from the dead!

What a means of grace was that prayer-meeting. What spiritual mercies flowed through it. In all Jerusalem, in all the globe, was there any gathering to be compared with that? Would it not have been better to be absent from any meeting ever held than from that? "And Thomas was not with them when Jesus came." So he was left to doubts and darkness and gloom. The testimony of his brethren made no impression on him. The very words which his Master spoke to them were disbelieved. And what a reproof and rebuke awaited him for his unbelief, which would all have been gone had he been at the prayer-meeting.

"These things are written for our instruction and admonition." I don't know as I have suggested the true reason why Thomas was not with them at the prayer-meeting when Jesus came. You can decide as well

as I. But there must have been a good reason why the account is written in the word of God. In reading the account, it always makes me feel sad that at this wonderful, joyful, most important prayer-meeting, "Thomas was not with them when Jesus came."

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